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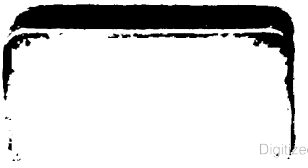
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A TRANSLATION

OF

# THE GREAT COMMENTARY

OF

CORNELIUS A LAPIDE.

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*Vol. I., price, 12s.* *Vol. III. in the Press.*

A TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

OF THE

# GREAT COMMENTARY UPON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

OF

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(S. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.)

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THE

# GREAT COMMENTARY

OF

# CORNELIUS À LAPIDE.

1.2

TRANSLATED BY

THOMAS W. MOSSMAN, B.A.
RECTOR OF TORRINGTON, LINCOLNSHIRE.

ASSISTED BY VARIOUS SCHOLARS.

כִּי־הִנְאַת בֵּיתְךָ אֲכָלָתְנִי

S. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.—CHAPS. X. TO XXI.

JOHN HODGES:
24, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND, LONDON.

1876.

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# PREFACE.

In presenting to the reader the Second Volume of this Translation of the great work of Cornelius à Lapide, I desire to mention that it has not been within my purpose to give an equivalent for every word of the original. This ought to have been stated at the commencement of the first volume, and I greatly regret the omission.

The stern exigencies of publication have compelled me to compress the translation of the Commentary upon the Gospels within five octavo volumes, when a reproduction of the Latin original, *verbatim et literatim*, would have probably necessitated seven.

The matter standing thus, I have had to exercise my own judgment as to the character of the necessary omissions and compression. I am perfectly aware that in omitting or compressing anything at all, I expose myself to the full fury of the blasts of unkind, bitter, or unscrupulous criticism; though criticism of this kind has, I am thankful to say, been confined to a single print.

I have no fault whatever to find with the criticism of the R. Catholic *Tablet*. It was dictated by a thoroughly honest and commendable, but certainly mistaken fear, that I had made omissions for controversial purposes. Of this, I hope I am incapable.

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With regard to the other adverse criticism to which I have alluded, I am sorry that I cannot regard it as either just or righteous. One reason is this; the reviewer in question concludes his remarks by saying—"Those who are familiar with Cornelius' work are aware of the terseness and pungency of the author's style. Whether it would be possible to give this in English we cannot say, but the present translators do not appear to have even attempted the task, either in their literal rendering, or in their paraphrased passages, so that much of the sententiousness of the original has evaporated."

It would be almost impossible to single out from the whole range of the history of criticism a more telling example of its frequent utter worthlessness and disregard of a strict adherence to truth. In the first place, with regard to Cornelius himself, those who are best acquainted with him—his greatest lovers and admirers—are aware that if there is one thing more than another which they are disposed to regret, it is his great prolixity, and the inordinate length of his sentences.

Secondly, if the hostile reviewer had examined my translation solely for the purposes of an honest criticism, he could not have helped becoming aware of the fact that there is scarcely a page in which I have not broken up what is a single sentence in the Latin into two, three, and sometimes even more sentences in the English.

Lastly, I need not tell scholars that it would be far more easy and pleasant to myself to translate literally, without any omission whatever, than to have continually to be, as it were, upon the stretch to omit or compress what must be omitted, when very often all seems valuable. I can truly say I have often spent as much time in deliberating what to omit, or how to compress a passage,

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as would have sufficed to have written a translation of it in full twice over.

About two-thirds of the twenty-first chapter of S. Matthew, the last in this second volume, have been translated without any omission, or compression whatever. A note is appended to the place where this unabridged translation begins. This will enable any one who cares to do so, to compare the abridged portion with the unabridged; and both with the original.

T. W. M.

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# SAINT MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

## CHAPTER X.

*The Apostles are sent to do Miracles, and to preach.*

AND when he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he gave them power *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son* of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus;

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

10 Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

12 And when you come into an house, salute it.

13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

16 ¶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.



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19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

24 The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord.

25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beezlebub, how much more *shall they call* them of his household?

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

27 What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in he ear, *that* preach ye upon the house-tops.

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

36 And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

40 ¶ He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

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*And when He had called*, &c. Observe that Christ, out of all His disciples, chose principally twelve, as S. Luke shows more at length (xvi. 13.) He chose twelve Apostles that they should be His chief legates, whom He invested with plenary authority and power, and sent them forth into all the world to proclaim His Gospel unto all nations. He chose also seventy-two others; but these He called disciples, not Apostles, although they too, are spoken of by ancient writers as Apostles, that is legates or ambassadors of Christ. And such in fact they were, but with less power, as being subject and subordinate to the twelve Apostles. These twelve Christ now sends forth, that they may begin to discharge the office to which they were called, that they may serve their novitiate under Himself as their master, that afterwards being made priests and bishops, they may after His death fully accomplish their office and ministry. Wherefore Christ made the Apostles the Princes of His Church, and superior to all the faithful, both martyrs, confessors, and virgins, not only in office and dignity, but also in grace and sanctity. For upon them he has founded His Church, as we may learn from Ephesians ii. 20, and Rev. xxi. 19.

Moreover the power of the Apostles was the greatest in the Church, far greater than that of Bishops; for the Apostles were chosen and sent forth directly by Christ the Lord, as it were legates *a latere* of Christ, with absolute power through the whole world, not only to preach the Gospel, and confirm it by miracles, but also by writing. For the Apostles had the power of writing canonical books (as in fact Matthew and John wrote Gospels), canonical epistles and the Apocalypse. They also had power to found churches everywhere, and to institute and ordain priests and bishops, and the whole hierarchical order, together with ceremonies of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and all the Sacraments.

Observe that in this triple power the Apostles were all equal among themselves and with S. Peter. Yet were they subordinate to him as their head and superior. This is why Peter (ver. 2) is placed and named first amongst them.

*And heal all manner of sickness*, &c. Gr. νόσον, *i.e.*, *disease*. Both



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this power, and that of casting out devils was given to the Apostles, after the manner of an abiding habit. God did not endue them with a physical faculty of healing diseases; but His omnipotent power was promised to them so as always to assist them, in such a way that as often as they willed to do these things, immediately God cast out the devils, and bestowed healing. This power was given them for the confirmation of their preaching, that by this means they might convince the people.

*Now the names*, &c. The reason why Christ chose exactly twelve Apostles, neither more nor less, was that they should correspond to the twelve Patriarchs, sons of Jacob. For as these were of the Jews, so were the Apostles the parents of all Christians. So SS. Jerome, Austin, and all the Fathers. Rabanus speaks of other mysteries in this number, and following him, S. Thomas (*in Catena*) says: This number twelve is made by multiplying three into four, and signifies that they should preach belief in the Trinity in the four quarters of the world. They were typified by the twelve sons of Jacob, by the twelve princes of the children of Israel, by the twelve wells of Elim, by the twelve stones of the breast-plate, the twelve loaves of the shew-bread, the twelve spies, the twelve stones taken out of Jordan, the twelve oxen that supported the brazen sea, the twelve stars in the crown of the bridegroom in the Apocalypse, the twelve foundations of the city, the twelve gates.

*The first, Simon, who is called Peter*, &c. Beza, that he may get rid of the primacy of Peter and the Bishops of Rome who have succeeded him, thinks that *first* is a spurious reading, and ought to be expunged. But it is the uniform reading of all the codices and versions.—Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Hebrew. And it is incredible that the passage should have been corrupted by the later Greeks, who are schismatics, and deny the primacy of Peter. Rather would they have expunged the word *first*, if they could colourably have done so. In short, wherever the names of all the Apostles are given in Scripture, Peter is placed first, Judas last; whilst with respect to the rest the order varies, as is plain from Mark iii. 16, Luc. vi. 14, Acts i. 13.

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Moreover, Peter is called the first of the Apostles: not in age, for Andrew was older than he, as Epiphanius testifies (*Hæres* 51); not in vocation, for Andrew was called before him (*S. John* i., 41); not in love, for Christ loved S. John above all the rest, and therefore he leaned upon His breast at His last Supper. It remains, therefore, that Peter was the first of the Apostles in excellence and authority, being, indeed, their head and ruler. Thus it is that the names of the rest are not given in any uniform order, nor one called second, another third, because all were equal, and all equally subject to Peter. From this word *first*, in Latin *primus*, comes the expression *Primacy of Peter*, which all the ancient Greeks and Latins acknowledged. Hear S. Chrysostom, "Peter was the first and, as it were, the head of all the Apostles." S. Jerome (*lib. I. contra Jovin. c.* 17), "Among the twelve Apostles, one is chosen, that a head being appointed, occasion of schism may be taken away." Ambrosiaster (*in 2 Cor.* c. 12), Andrew followed the Saviour before Peter, and yet not Andrew, but Peter, received the Primacy. Peter, therefore, as the Primate of the Apostles, had power to admonish and correct them if they erred in faith or morals, to put an end to contentions, to assign them their provinces, to substitute others in their place if they fell, as he substituted Matthias in the room of the traitor, Judas. For this subordination of the Apostles, of bishops, and all the faithful under one head was necessary for the unity, stability, and good government of the Church, as S. Cyprian teaches—*Hæres* 2. Peter alone among the Apostles had ordinary jurisdiction, to which in due order the Roman Pontiffs succeed. For Peter set up his Pontifical Chair at Rome, where he died a martyr. But the Apostles had delegated jurisdiction from Christ, to which there were no successors.

You will say, the bishops are said to be the successors of the Apostles. I reply, this is only said by way of analogy, because bishops share with the Apostles in episcopal order and jurisdiction, and because bishops are superior to other priests in the same way that the twelve Apostles were superior to the seventy-two disciples. But bishops do not possess that three-fold Apostolic power of which I spoke in the beginning of this chapter. The power of bishops only

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extends to their own dioceses, but that of the Apostles to all nations throughout the whole world.

*Andrew his brother.* Mark places James and John before Andrew, making him the fourth. Luke does the same in Acts i., 13, but in his Gospel he places him before them as Matthew does. These variations in the order of the names is to show that the Apostles are all equal in dignity and office. Whence Cajetan says upon this passage "Peter alone has the distinction of being called *first*, in order to intimate that it closely pertains to Christian knowledge to recognise the Primacy of Peter, and that it is of no consequence to know the order of the Apostles among themselves."

S. John in the Apocalypse, in describing the twelve Apostles as the twelve foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem, assigns to each his place with their own peculiar precious stones—The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, a sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. (Rev. xxi., 19).

The first, jasper, denotes Peter, on account of the firmness of his faith; the second, a sapphire, Andrew, because of his heavenly life and love; the third, a chalcedony, or carbuncle, James, burning with zeal; the fourth, an emerald, John, blooming and a virgin; the fifth, a sardonyx, Philip, on account of the whiteness of his mind; the sixth, the ruddy sardius, Bartholomew, flayed alive; the seventh, a chrysolyte, the colour of the sea, Matthew, a penitent; the eighth, a polished beryl, Thomas, polished and established by Christ in the faith of his Resurrection; the ninth, a topaz, James the less, radiant with sanctity; the tenth, a chrysoprasus, Judas Thaddæus, who, by his acute wisdom, was hostile to heretics, as it were an onion, for πράσον means an onion; the eleventh, a jacinth, Simon the Canaanite, on account of the sweetness of his manners; the twelfth, the lowly Matthias, and the least.

Paul and Barnabas are not reckoned among these twelve Apostles, because they were called by Christ to the Apostolate, not whilst He

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was upon earth, but when He was reigning in heaven. They had equal power, and an equal measure of the Spirit, with the twelve Apostles.

*Andrew* is a Greek word, and means *manly, strong, heroic.* Many of the Jews, after they became subject to Alexander's successors, learnt Greek, and took Greek names. Andrew was, what his name signifies—brave and heroic in his preaching and passion, from the strength of his love to Christ, panting for his cross. He was, says Gaudentius, the first of all the disciples of John the Baptist, and being by him sent to Christ, first began to know Him.

*James, the son of Zebedee:* he was surnamed *the Greater.* He was the patron and Apostle of Spain, and was the first of the Apostles who suffered martyrdom, being beheaded by Herod Agrippa.

*John, his brother.* This is the beloved disciple of Christ, of whom I have spoken at length in the prefaces to his Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse.

*Philip* is Greek; φίλος ἵππων, *a lover of horses*, meaning a *knight, warlike.* For Philip was as a war-horse of Christ against the Jews and infidels. Concerning this, see the Apoc. (vi. 2), "and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer."

*Bartholomew* has been explained to mean *the son of him who suspendeth the waters*, from *bar*, a son, *thala*, he suspended, *marim*, waters. Whence Ruperti and Osorius think that Christ turned water into wine upon the occasion of Bartholomew's wedding at Cana of Galilee, as though he had been the bridegroom. Others reject this. For Bartholomew is the same as son of Tolmai. Tolmai was a common name among the Hebrews, as is plain from Josh. xv. 14, and 2 Sam. iii. 3. Less aptly, some interpret Bartholomew as son of Ptolemy, as though he had been sprung from the Ptolemies, kings of Egypt.

*Thomas*, in Gr. *Didymus*, a twin. Concerning him, see on Jo. xx. 24.

*Matthew, the publican.* Note S. Matthew's humility, who when

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the other Evangelists were silent about his being a publican, publicly announced himself a sinner.

*James, the son of Alphæus:* Alphæus means in Hebrew, *learned*, or *a doctor*. This Alphæus, the father of James, was a different person from Alphæus, the father of Matthew (Mark ii. 14). For this Alphæus, the father of James, was the husband of Mary of Cleopas, who is called the sister of Mary, the mother of the Lord (Jo. xix. 25). Whence Helecas, Bishop of Saragossa, and others, think Alphæus is the same as Cleopas. Alphæus begat James and Jude of Mary. This was James the Less, of whom I speak at length in the Preface to his Epistle.

*Thaddæus:* this is the same as Jude, the author of a canonical Epistle. Of him also I have spoken in the Preface to his Epistle.

*Simon the Canaanite.* This Simon is not so called because he was sprung from the Canaanites, as some wrongly imagine, for all the Apostles were Jews, but because he was born at Cana of Galilee. Hence Nicephorus (lib. 8, c. 30) and Baronius think that he was the bridegroom at the marriage feast when Christ turned the water into wine. Because *Cana* in Heb. means *zeal*, S. Jerome says he was called the *Canaanite, i.e. Zealotes*, the Zealot, with a double allusion to the city of Cana and his zeal.

*And Judas Iscariot:* as though *Ish keriot: i.e.*, a man of Carioth, a city of the tribe of Judah. (See Josh. xv. 25.) So Angelus Caninius on Hebrew names (cap. 13.) Others, with greater probability, are of opinion that he was so called because he came from the village of Iscarioth, in the tribe of Ephraim, not far from Samaria. So S. Jerome in this place, and on Is. xxviii. 1, Maldonatus and Adrichomius. Iscariot means in Hebrew the same as mercenary, for *sachar* is merchandise. And this well agrees with Judas, who made merchandise of Christ. Christ chose Judas, although He knew that he would prove a traitor, because He was willing to bear his treachery, and to add it to the weight of His Passion, for He wished His Passion to be in all respects complete. He willed to suffer every kind of torment, and from all sorts of men, to teach us to do good, not only to the good and thankful,

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but also to the evil and the unthankful. Hear S. Ambrose (lib. 5 in Luc.): "Judas is chosen, not through imprudence, but through providence, since Christ willed to be betrayed by him, in order that thou, if thou art forsaken by thy friend, or even if betrayed by thy friend, mayest bear patiently the error of thy judgment, the loss of thy kindness." (See S. Jerome on Is. xxviii. 1.) "Woe to the crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, and the fading flower, the glory of his exaltation" (Vulg.), which the Sept. translates, "Woe to the crown of wrong, the mercenaries of Ephraim, a flower falling from glory upon the top of the fat mountain." S. Jerome understands this mystically of Judas, the traitor; "who was," he says, "of the tribe of Ephraim, of one of its villages, Iscarioth. He indeed sold the Lord for a price. He indeed, as a flower, fell from the glory of his Apostleship upon that most fat mountain of which we suppose it is spoken, 'Jacob hath eaten and drunk, and is filled; and the beloved hath grown fat and kicked:' or, according to the Heb., upon 'the valley of the fat ones,' *i.e.*, Gethsemane, by which also is signified the name of the place in which Judas betrayed the Lord." After a little, he adds, "The traitor was drunken, not with wine, but with avarice, and the incurable madness of asps, even the food of the devil; who, after the morsel, entered into him and wholly devoured him, because 'his prayer was turned into sin,' and not, even in repentance, had he the fruit of salvation."

Note, first, Christ combines together all his Apostles, and assigns to each his companion, making six pairs. With Peter He joins Andrew, and so on; that each may derive help and confirmation from his companion in his preaching. And for this cause He sent them out two and two (Luc. x. 1.)

Again, among His Apostles, Christ chose three pairs of brethren, viz., Peter and Andrew, James and John, James the Less and Jude; some add Simon the Canaanite who, they say, was a brother of James and Jude. He did this to teach how dear to Him is brotherly love, according to that saying in Eccles. (xxv. 1): "In these things hath my spirit delight, which are approved before God and man, the concord of brethren, the love of neighbours, and a husband and

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wife agreeing together." Also Prov. xviii. 19, "a brother who is helped by a brother is as a strong city."

Observe, secondly, several of the Apostles were relations of Christ, as James and John, James the Less and Jude. For Christ chose His Apostles, not to be sleek and wealthy princes, but to endure labours, poverty, crosses, torments, and martyrdom. Whence He gave them abundance of good things—not temporal but spiritual—even as the order of charity requires, according to which it is right to wish and care for greater grace for parents and relations than for others.

I may add, it behoved the WORD, when He took our flesh, to unite those who were most near to Him in the flesh more closely to His Divinity also, by grace. And this He did, so that His mother was the holiest of all, then S. Joseph, after him Joachim and Anna, as His grandparents: also John the Baptist and his mother, James and John, James the Less, and Jude, as His relations and kinsfolk. For these, because by fleshly relationship they were nearer Christ's humanity, so also were they brought into chosen connection with His Divinity through grace. Therefore this was not in Christ the fault of accepting persons, as it is in Prelates, who, contrary to what is right, burden rather than truly honour their nephews and kinsmen with dignities, prebends and riches.

Lastly, there were three chief Apostles, viz., Peter, James and John, whom Christ took as the witnesses of His transfiguration, His Passion in the Garden, and other secrets, whence these are, as it were, the pillars of the Church, and the Triumvirs of the Apostles.

*Go not into the way of the Gentiles.* Syriac has, *of the profane*: *Way of the G.* is a Hebraism for, *to the Gentiles.* Similar is Jer. ii, 18. "And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt?". That is, "Why art thou going into Egypt?"

This is the first precept of Christ, by which sending His Apostles forth to preach, He bids them go not to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, but to the Jews. The reason was, because they were the children of the Kingdom, and sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whom the Messiah, that is Christ, had been promised by God.

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Had not Christ acted thus, the Jews might have taken exception against him and the Apostles, and said, "Thou art not the true Messiah, for thou preachest the Gospel to the Gentiles and Samaritans. Our Messiah was promised by the Prophets to the Jews, not to the Gentiles." This precept, however, was only temporary. It onlylasted during the life of Christ on earth. After His Resurrection Christ sent His Apostles to evangelize the nations throughout the whole world. Then was taken away the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, and of both there was made one Fold and one Shepherd. So S. Jer., Chrys., and others. S. Paul puts the command of Christ in this verse in another form, when he says, "For I say that Christ Jesus was the Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."

*And as ye go, preach, saying*, &c. This is the second and the chief command of Christ to His Apostles, viz., that they should traverse Judea, and preach the Kingdom of Heaven, and invite, yea compel men to come into it. It was as though Christ said, In a short time I will, by My death, open Heaven to men, which has been shut for so many thousands of years by Adam's sin, and I will open the way of entrance into it. Invite all therefore to enter upon this way that they may gain the Kingdom. This was the sum and substance of Christ's preaching.

*Heal the sick*, &c. This is the third precept of Christ, by which He bids them use freely the power which had been given them of working miracles to persuade men to believe in Christ, that their souls might be healed of unbelief.

*Freely ye have received*, &c. For *freely* the Greek has, δωρεὰν, *as a gift, gratis* in the Vulgate. This is Christ's fourth precept. By using the word *gratis*, he takes away the occasion of pride, says S. Chrys., since they know that they have not this power of themselves; but by God's free gift have received it, without merit of their own. In like manner this word *gratis* excludes all avarice and simony, that they may not sell their miracles for money. Again, they are admonished to be liberal in exercising this power, keeping as the end in view the benefit of others, like fountains, which the more water

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they send forth abroad, the more they interiorly receive. This is what Isaiah foretold concerning Christ. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price." For this liberality became the King of kings, that is Christ the Lord, and therefore He willed His Apostles to be altogether opposed to everyappearance, yea, even shadow, of simony and covetousness, that they should not receive any gift, lest men should think they were seeking their own wealth, and so be turned away from the faith of Christ. The Apostles would have sinned and broken the command of Christ if they had received gifts on account of their preaching. Thus S. Hilarion, as S. Jerome testifies in his life, healed very many sick persons, but would not receive any gifts from them, not so much as a morsel of bread; for he was wont to say, "*Gratis* ye have received, *gratis* give." He replied to a certain nobleman whose name was Orion, whom he had delivered from a legion of devils, and who urgently pressed him to receive a gift, at least that he might distribute it among the poor, "Be not grieved, my son, at what I do, for I do it for thy sake and my sake. If I should receive this I should offend God, and the legion would return to thee."

A provincial council of Constantinople in a Synodical Epistle expounds, *Gratis ye have received*, &c., of the priesthood, that it must not be simoniacally sold.

Observe, the precise reason why the Apostles were bound to bestow gratis the *Charismata* given to them by God was not merely because they had received them gratis from God. For he who has received knowledge, or some natural skill infused into him by God, like Bezaleel, the architect of the Tabernacle,—such an one, I say, may lawfully sell it, and teach it to others for money, as some masters of arts do. The precise reason, therefore, is because this thing is so sublime, and of such a nature that it cannot be acquired by human industry, but can only be received by the free grace of God; because it is indeed divine, and therefore far surpassing and transcending all price. This is the meaning of *gratis ye have received.* Wherefore to wish to estimate it at a price, and to sell it, is to treat it

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unworthily and profane it. It is to do a grievous indignity to it and to God, from Whom it has its sanctity: and therefore it is the crime of simony and sacrilege.

You will say, Then by parity of reasoning, he who exchanges one sacred thing for another is guilty of simony by the law of nature, and by the Divine law, because he does not give it gratis. Adrian admits this (*quodlib.* 9 *ad* 4, *conclus. lit.* E.). But I reply by denying the consequence. For in this place, to give *gratis* is to give without temporal hire or reward. This may be collected from what follows: *Provide* (Gr. *Possess*) *neither gold*, &c. For things sacred have no temporal price. And this is neither given nor received when one sacred thing is exchanged for another. So SS. Jer., Chrys., and others. (See Lessius, *Tract. de Simonia*, dub. 3.) Let religious and apostolic men follow closely this precept of Christ, for it very greatly conduces to His glory and the salvation of souls, as I have learned by an experience of forty years. S. Ignatius, the Founder of our Society (Reg. 17, Sum. Constit.) thus wisely lays down: "Let all who are under obedience to this Society remember that they ought to give gratis what they have gratis received, neither asking nor receiving pay, nor any alms, by which masses, or confessions, or sermons, or any other offices whatsoever of the things which the Society, according to our institution, is able to exercise, may seem to be compensated; that thus it may be able to advance with greater freedom both in the Divine service and the edification of our neighbours."

Once, when S. Antony was on a journey, he saw an immense piece of gold. He admired the size of the glittering piece of metal, and ran as fast as he could to his mountain, as though he were running from a fire. Whenever money was offered to S. Vincent Ferrar as he was preaching through the villages, he refused it, and forbade his companions accepting it. S. Francis was wont to say that "money to the servants of God is nothing else than a devil, and a poisonous snake."

*Provide neither gold, &c., in your purses*, Gr. *in your girdles;* for formerly they attached purses to their girdles, or wove them into

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their girdles. This was especially the case with soldiers and travellers. Whence the proverb, "He has lost his girdle," said of him who has no money. Hence also coffers have been called girdles.

This is the fifth precept of Christ given to His Apostles concerning not possessing money. It was given for three reasons. 1. That being free from all earthly affections and cares, they should depend entirely upon God's providence. 2. That they should be wholly intent upon preaching the Gospel, and give all their thoughts and cares to that. 3. That they might give to all nations an illustrious example of simplicity, poverty, contempt of riches, whereby—by means of this angelical life—they might draw all men to love and admire them. There is nothing, says Euthymius, which makes men so admirable as a frugal life, and to be contented with whatever comes to hand.

*Symbolically*, S. Jerome says, "gold, we often read, is to be taken for understanding, silver for speech, brass for voice. These cannot be received by us from others, but are given to us as a possession by the Lord."

You will inquire whether those precepts of Christ concerning not possessing money, shoes, staff, and two tunics, or coats, were given to the Apostles in perpetuity, or were only temporary? S. Hilary, S. Jerome, S. Ambrose, S. Austin, and after them Maldonatus, are of opinion that they were perpetual; so that the Apostles in all their travels, in which they preached to the Gentiles, were tied to this form and species of poverty. The common opinion is that these precepts were only temporarily binding, that is to say, only whilst they were preaching to the Jews during Christ's earthly life.

First, I say that this latter opinion is the correct one. It is plainly so from Christ's saying, *Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles*, &c. For the Messiah must be first shown to the Jews, that if they received Him, the Gentiles might the more readily accept Him.

2. It is plain from Luc. xxii. 35, where Christ, speaking retrospectively of this mission and precept, says, *When I sent you without bag and scrip and shoes, lacked ye anything?* And they said, *Nothing.* He

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saith unto them, *But now*, &c. This word *now* shows that he was giving them a different precept, viz., that they should take a scrip, and buy a sword.

3. The Apostles in going to the Gentiles were preaching to infidels who were likely at first to be prejudiced against them as enemies of their gods, and who would not deign to give them food and hospitality. Before, therefore, they could persuade them to believe, they must provide themselves with the means of living, especially as they were often accompanied by a large number of catechists, interpreters, and other coadjutors. Thus, when Paul was going to Jerusalem, there accompanied him Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Timotheus, Caius, Tychicus and Trophimus (See Acts, xx. 4).

The Apostles were accustomed to allow a pious and wealthy woman to accompany them, to provide for them. This clearly appears from 1. Cor., ix. 5 : "Have we not power to carry about a woman, a sister (Vulg.), even as the other Apostles?" Christ Himself did the same thing, who permitted Magdalen, and other pious women whom he had converted, to accompany Him to provide for Himself and His followers (see Luc. viii. 3). Yea, Judas had coffers (Vulg.), and bore what was put into them. And in the 6th of John, the disciples say to Christ : "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?"

You may say that Christ did not Himself keep the precept which He gave to His Apostles concerning not carrying money. I answer that Christ did observe it at the commencement of His ministry. He was then without any coffers, as appears from His words, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." It was with the object of providing for His twelve Apostles and seventy Disciples, whom He took about with Him, that He permitted Judas to carry coffers (Vulg.). For who could exercise hospitality towards so great a number of people? Who could, or would, sustain them for a continuance? But Christ sent His Apostles throughout Judea only in pairs. And two people could easily find hospitality from anyone piously disposed. In like manner when S. Francis Xavier was going to the Indies, he took no

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provision for his journey into the ship. Indeed, he refused what was offered him by the King of Portugal. He daily begged his bread from the sailors and passengers, because he was alone. But now, at the present time, when fifties and hundreds from the Society of Jesus and other Orders are often sent out to preach the Gospel in the Indies, it is only right that they should carry some provision with them for their voyage. For where are the sailors or passengers who could or would supply all these persons during a six months' voyage? So S. Vincent Ferrer, who went through the countries of Europe in an apostolic manner evangelizing, was wont to have hundreds, yea thousands of people accompanying him. And so he had his purveyors, who provided food and other necessaries for all; for the ordinary inhabitants could not have borne the burden.

I say, however, in the second place, that these precepts, so far as their substance and scope are concerned, which were to exhibit a mind free from covetousness, and to place before it a great contempt of all earthly things, and a firm trust in the providence of God; these are the things, I say, which Christ wished to impress upon His Apostles by these precepts. And these the Apostles in very deed fulfilled, when, having received the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, they thought, spoke, and treated of nothing except heavenly things. And so these precepts of Christ, not merely as to their scope, but as to their very letter, whenever and wherever it was possible to do so, were fulfilled by them. Yea, to these precepts Paul added the determination that he would not receive from the faithful the expense of his maintenance, but would procure a livelihood by the labour of his hands. And this is all that is meant by the Fathers who were cited at the commencement of this discussion. S. Francis imitated this example of Apostolic poverty when he sent out his brethren two by two to preach, and gave them this as their only viaticum, "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He will nourish thee."

*Nor scrip*, &c. The scrip is a pouch, or traveller's bag, in which wayfarers put bread and food to eat on the way, hence the adage, "The beggar's bag is not full."

*Neither two coats*: understand two pairs of coats, or tunics, says

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S. Thomas, for a change, that you may put on, now one, now the other. For Christ does not here forbid the putting on of two garments at the same time on account of cold or other necessity, for Christ Himself was clothed with two garments, as appears from John xix. 23. So S. Jerome, &c.

More simply, Lyra, Toletus and Barradi understand a single tunic to be here meant. For one coat in so hot a country as Judea is sufficient. Wherefore Christ had only one outer coat, for that seamless garment was an inner one, or a shirt. Over the outer garment it was afterwards the custom to throw a pallium, or cloke.

*Neither shoes:* not two pair of shoes, say S. Thomas and Cajetan: but the more simple way of taking it is to understand that such shoes as cover the whole foot are forbidden, not sandals, which only protect the soles of the feet from being hurt by stones. S. Mark (vi. 9) shows that these were allowed to the Apostles. For Palestine is a rough and stony country as well as a hot one. So S. Jer., Enthym., Tolet, Jansen, and S. Austin understand the passage. But shoes confine and, as it were, imprison the feet, and make them less expeditious in travelling, and sometimes too hot. Christ then forbade shoes to His Apostles, as they were travelling about Palestine, that they might make greater expedition in their journeys, and to take away undue care of their feet. Shoes are called by the Greeks ὑποδήματα, *i.e.*, *what is bound*, or *tied*, because they were formerly bound or tied with strings above, as is still the custom with many. That the Apostles after Christ's Ascension made use of sandals, appears from Acts xii., where the Angel says to Peter, *Bind on thy sandals.* Of such a kind is S. Andrew's sandal in the Cathedral of Treves, which has been shown me by the Reverend, the Provost. Such were the sandals worn by the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as appears from their ancient pictures preserved at Rome in the Codex of the Emperor Basil Porphyrogenitus, in the Vatican. Such too may be seen in the picture of the Blessed Virgin, painted by S. Luke, and preserved at Rome. The Child Jesus is there represented in her arms. He is shod with sandals which are bound about the feet above, with strings, in such a way that the toes and upper portion of the



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feet are entirely uncovered. Nothing is covered except the sole of the foot.

Many of the early Christians followed this example of Christ and His Apostles, and went without shoes. Lucian shows this in his *Philopator*, where describing a Christian's dress, he says, "He wears a ragged cloke, without hat or shoes, with unkempt hair." Similarly Plato, says S. Jerome, "bade that the two extremities of the body, the head and the feet should be left uncovered, that they may not become tender. For when these are strong, the other parts of the body will be robust." On the cloke of the Christians there was the old proverb, *Gone from the toga to the pallium*, meaning that a man had gone over from heathenism to Christianity. For heathens wore the toga, Christians the pallium, or cloke. Whence Tertullian (*lib. de Pallio c.* 5), "we say nothing about shoes, about the peculiar torment of the toga, the most unclean protection of the feet, albeit false enough. For how is it not expedient that the barefooted man should be stiff with cold and heat, like the crook-footed man in shoes! Vast assistance is there in walking from the cobbler's stall! The inventors had an eye to the votaries of Venus!" Very excellently says Clement of Alexandria (*lib.* 2. *Pædagog. cap.* 11), "Most becoming is it in a man not to have any shoes, unless he be a soldier. For a man that is shod has no small resemblance to one who is fettered. It is the best kind of exercise, and conduces to health and expedition to go with naked feet, unless necessity prevent: but if we are not going on a journey, and are unable to walk with bare feet, we must use the sort of shoes which the Athenians call Κονίποδας, because, as I conjecture, the feet are near the ground. John is a sufficient witness of the advantage of being lightly and simply shod. He said that he was not worthy to unloose the latchet of the Lord's sandals. He had no finely worked shoes, who exhibited to the Hebrews the pattern of true philosophy."

*Symbolically*, S. Austin (*lib.* 2. *de Consens. Evangel. c.* 30.), says, "Mark saith they were to be shod with sandals, by which the foot is neither covered above, nor yet bare on the ground. For verily it was the Lord's will that the Gospel should neither be hid, nor yet

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that it should rely upon earthly advantages." The *Gloss.*, "By an Apostle must be cast away gold, that is, worldly wisdom; silver, that is, eloquence; money in the purse, that is, hidden wisdom; a scrip, that is the burden of the world; shoes, that is, the examples of dead works."

*Nor yet staves.* The Gr., followed by the Vulg., has *staff* in the singular. You will say, Mark (vi. 9), says differently, viz., *a staff only*. I reply, Mark is speaking of the Heb. *mischan*, a rod, or a staff, on which to lean. For this was the symbol of poor travellers, who relieve their weariness by leaning on a staff. This was how Jacob journeyed to Mesopotamia. But Matthew is here speaking of *matte*, *i.e.*, a rod for defence, or punishment. This was what Christ forbade His Apostles carrying. Observe that the Greek ῥάβδος, a rod, has three meanings. First. The symbol of honour and power, such as the sceptre of monarchs, the fasces of consuls, the rod of prætors and judges. This is called in Hebrew, *scebet*, whence sceptre. As David says in Ps. ii., "Thou shalt rule them with a rod (*scebet*) of iron." And Ps. xlv., "The sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre." And Is. xiv. 5, "The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers." Hence also: ῥαδοφόροι, that is, rod-bearers, was the name given to lictors and officers, by whom the magistrates executed their sentences. The rod which they bore was the sign of their office. So also the Jewish Doctors were wont to carry a rod, or wand in their hands, says Lyra, as the mark of their teaching, in the same way that schoolmasters now make use of a ferula. Christ forbids this practice to His Apostles. He bids them carry before them modesty, humility; not imperious authority and power. It was such a rod as that of which I have been speaking that Moses, the lawgiver of the stiff-necked Israelites, bore, and with which he smote Pharaoh with the ten plagues, and chastised the rebellious Jews. Christ, whose law is the spirit of love and sweetness, hath another rod.

Second. Ῥάβδος, rod, or staff, hath the same meaning as *matte*, in the sense of a rod with which you strike or beat a person, as teachers scourge their scholars. Thus Ps. lxxxix., "I will visit their



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iniquities with a rod." And Exod. xxi. 20, "He who smiteth his manservant, or his maidservant with a rod." So the arms of rustics are sticks and rods. David went against Goliath with no other arms than his staff and his sling. And Ezek. (c. xxxix.), speaking of the slaughter of Gog, says "They shall burn the arms, the shield, and the spear, the bows and arrows, the staves and the javelins." Also Is. xx., "Asshur, the rod of mine anger." So that in this place by staff, arms of any kind are forbidden by Christ to His Apostles. He bids them trust not in arms but in God, and that they should be preachers of Divine protection, and propagate the faith, not by fighting, but by suffering. "For he who has the Lord for his help, what need hath he of a staff?" says S. Jerome.

Third. Ῥάβδος signifies *mischan*, a staff on which to lean. This Christ allowed to His Apostles.

Lastly. Johannes Alba (*lib. elect p.* 337), by staff here understands one on which was cut some mark or sign of mutual friendship, so that it was what was called a *tessera*, or pledge of friendship, which people were accustomed to show when they went to personally unknown friends, that they might be received to hospitality by them. Wherefore when men renounced friendship, they were said to break the *tessera* of friendship. So that Christ's meaning in this place would be, "Rely not upon human help, bear not the *tessera* of friendship as the guarantee for your reception. God will provide you with hospitality." But this sense is a strained one.

*Symbolically*, the staff or rod denotes the power of the Apostles. S. Austin.

*The workman is worthy*, &c. He gives the reason why He forbids the carrying a viaticum. "Let preachers," says S. Chrys., "receive their support from the people, but their reward or their hire from God." In other places this support is called *wages*, or *hire*, from the similitude of those workmen, to whom food is given as a part of their wages. Yet in the case of preachers it is not properly wages, for preaching far transcends all price, and all human wages. S. Paul (in 1 Cor. ix.) calls this support of preachers, their *pay* or *stipend*, from the similitude of soldiers, to whom it is not given as wages; for what

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is it in comparison with the perils they undergo? but as the support which is their due. "Labour therefore in the Lord's vineyard, O ye Apostles, and preach zealously. Be not anxious about sustenance, about food and raiment, for God will abundantly provide for you either by your hosts, or from some other of the rich treasures of His Providence."

*Into whatsoever city*, &c. *Worthy*, that is, apt and meet to receive the Gospel, one who fears God, and leads a good life, who desires salvation, who shows hospitality to poor and pious people, especially preachers; one who knows, as S. Jerome says, "that he is receiving a favour, rather than conferring one."

This is the sixth precept which Christ gives to His Apostles concerning hospitality, when they were going to preach to the Jews, that they should not lodge with any one who was opposed to faith in Christ, or of evil report, lest his infamy should bring discredit upon themselves. "A host," says S. Jerome, "should be chosen for his reputation among the people, and from his character with his neighbours; lest the worthiness of preaching should be besmirched by the infamy of the preacher's host."

*And there abide*, &c. Why? First, lest if the Apostles should go about from one host to another, they should appear changeable and inconstant. So S. Chrys. Secondly, not to grieve their first host, and do him a dishonour by migrating to one worthier. Thirdly, lest any one should call them gluttonous, seekers after the luxurious boards of the rich. It must be understood that this precept applies only when they did not remain very long in the same place, so as to become burdensome to their host; for in such a case charity and prudence would recommend a change of hostel.

*When ye enter into a house*, &c. This was the ancient method of salutation among the Hebrews, by which they prayed for the peace and prosperity of the master of the house and his family. The Hebrews understood it of temporal blessings, but Christ of spiritual. For Christ came to the world to make peace between God, man, and angels. Wherefore when He was born the angels sang, "Peace on earth, to men of goodwill" (Vulg.).

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This is the seventh precept—that they should pray for peace for their host, and by their prayer discover if he were worthy and suitable. The Apostles, therefore, pray for peace for their host, first with God, secondly with his family and neighbours and all other persons. S. Chrys. says that this salutation of the Apostles was not a mere naked and verbal one, but real and efficacious, and had the power of conferring upon their host (if he were worthy) actual peace —that is to say, grace, faith, and salvation.

*And if the house be worthy*, &c. That is, if—as He had said a little before—the *host* be worthy, that is, a lover of peace and salvation.

*But if it be not worthy*, &c. If the host refuse and reject your salutation of peace, *your peace shall return unto you*—Gr. ἐπιστραφήτω, *let it return*, in the sense of *shall return*. For the Heb. often uses the imperative instead of the future. Note the personification. Peace is here introduced as a person rejected by a host, and going elsewhere, and carrying the Apostles with him. If the host rejects your salutation of peace, your salutation shall not therefore be unfruitful, for there shall come to yourselves what you prayed for him, that is, peace and all prosperity. Thus shall your peace, repulsed by this unworthy host, come back to you, and lead you to some worthy host who will eagerly receive you and believe your preaching. There is a similar mode of expression in Ps. xxxv. 12, 13, to which Christ here makes an allusion: "They rewarded me evil for good," &c.; "And my prayer shall return into mine own bosom." So Eusebius, S. Athanasius, and Hesychius on this Psalm expound it. The latter says, "Into the bosom of Christ, *i.e.*, the Church of the Gentiles, the prayer of Christ (turned away by the Jews) falleth." This is what S. Paul said to the Jews: "It behoved that the Word of God should be spoken first unto you, but since ye reject it, and count yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

*And whosoever shall not receive you*, &c. . . . *the dust of your feet.* Luke and Mark add, *for a testimony against them.* Abul. says that the Apostles were to do this twice, once in the city and once outside the city. They were to do it by striking their sandals against

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the ground, or by knocking, or rubbing them upon a stone, to brush off the dust.

You will ask, Why was this? 1. S. Jerome says, dust is shaken off as a testimony of labour, to show that they had entered the city, and the Apostolic preaching had reached it. And as Theophylact.: "They testify that for their sakes they had made so long a journey, and it had profited them nothing."

2. *Shake off the dust*, as impious, on account of the impious inhabitants, that ye may signify that they are, as it were, *anathema*, and that ye will have nothing, not even their dust in common with them, as being doomed to eternal condemnation. So S. Jer. Theophyl., Ambrose, &c.

3. That this dust shaken off may be a witness in the day of judgment against their unbelief and wickedness. And this is why Luke adds, *for a testimony to them*, i.e., *against them.*

By this, which is the 8th precept of Christ, He tacitly bids His Apostles be of good courage, and not to be distressed, when they saw the Jews rejecting the Gospel, but as God's avengers to rise up boldly against them.

*Verily I say unto you*, &c. They shall be more heavily punished and condemned who reject the Apostles than the Sodomites were, who perished in the fearful fire from heaven, by which the whole Pentapolis was consumed, for an awful example to all ages.

You will ask, how can this be true, since the sin of Sodom was a very great crime contrary to nature, and crying to heaven? The sin of Sodom is reckoned amongst the worst sins, but in the catalogue of lusts, or sins against the natural law of chastity only, for, in other respects, it is certain that there are worse sins, such as heresy, infidelity, blasphemy, sacrilege, despair, hatred of God. Those therefore who rejected the Apostles, and in so doing rejected the grace and salvation of Christ, sinned far worse than the Sodomites, and that, not by a single, but by a manifold sin, viz., 1. by the sin of infidelity, 2. of disobedience, 3. of ingratitude, 4. of inhospitality, 5. of rebellion and contumacy against God, contrary to the law of nature, and of God, and against His grace so benevolently and

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liberally offered to them, and confirmed by so many miracles and benefits.

This denunciation has also in a measure an application to those who despise God's word, or vocation, or holy inspirations, against whom God thunders, in Prov. i. 24. "Because I called, and ye refused, I also will mock at your calamity."

S. Jerome proves from this passage that the punishments of the damned are not all equal, nor, by consequence, their faults.

Moreover Christ appositely compares those who rejected the Apostles to the Sodomites. 1. Because they were guilty of inhumanity and barbarity towards guests. 2. Because as the Sodomites were admonished by Lot and despised him, so were these admonished by Apostles whom Christ sent forth for their salvation. 3. As the Sodomites were punished by fire and brimstone from heaven, so will these be punished by fire and brimstone in hell, only far more severely; because if the Sodomites had heard the preaching of Christ and His Apostles, and had seen their miracles, they would have believed and repented.

*Behold I send you forth as sheep*, &c. S. Jerome, by *wolves*, understands the Scribes and Pharisees: others, any enemies, or persecutors. No animal is so defenceless as a sheep. In this way Christ sends his Apostles without arms, that he may shew forth His own power in them. He does not send them as lions, but as sheep, that by means of His miraculous power they may vanquish the wolves. Listen to S. Chrys., "Let them blush, who, like wolves, persecute their adversaries, when they behold innumerable wolves overcome by a very few sheep. And assuredly, so long as we are sheep, we shall easily overcome our enemies. But when we are changed into the nature of wolves, then we are overcome, for in such a case we have no more help from our shepherd, who feeds sheep not wolves." S. Chrys. observes that Christ foretells coming evils and persecutions to His Apostles for four reasons. 1. That they may learn His foreknowledge. 2. That they may not suppose such things happen through lack of power in their master. 3. That they may not be suddenly overcome. 4. That they may not

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be troubled at the time of the Cross. Christ thus, as it were, animates His Apostles, "Come, O ye my Apostles, I am sending you to the Jews and to Infidels, who will vex you and persecute you, but think of this, that it is *I* who send you, *I*, I say, who sent Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah and the rest of the prophets to Ahab, Jezebel and Manasseh, and other wicked kings. I animated, strengthened, and protected them, and when need was, I delivered them. And when at length I permitted them to be slain by them, it was that by their blood they might set a seal to My faith and religion, and win the laurel crown of martyrdom. In the same manner I now send you: and through you I am about to do the same, yea still greater things. I will be always with you, and stand by you, that in life ye may by the innocency of sheep, and in death by the meekness of sheep, conquer all men and all things."

Therefore by these words, *Behold I send you*, are signified the Divine authority, power, assistance, and protection of Christ whereby He defends His Apostles, as it were innocent sheep, against the wolves their enemies, that they may convert them by preaching, or else nobly vanquish them by dying. He therefore that will be Christ's true servant, disciple, and Apostle, let him look upon himself as sent forth like a sheep in the midst of wolves. So let him be lavish of his life, as though he were doomed, and prepared to endure labours and crosses, yea death itself, for Christ's sake. Albanus, the Captain General of the army of Charles V., had 400 stout and resolute youths, who were prodigal of life, and devoted to death, called the forlorn hope. In a battle, he despatched these against the strongest part of the enemy's ranks, that by their audacity and determination to die, they might throw those ranks into confusion, and so prepare the way for victory. Thus devoted and prodigal of his life let the Apostolic preacher of Christ deem himself, that he may subdue unbelievers to Christ the conqueror. Such a one blessed Xavier deemed himself, when he was going to the Indies, and said to his weeping friends: "Do merchants at such expense and such peril, prodigal of life, sail to India from zeal for earthly merchandise; and shall not I go thither for the sake of God and souls?"

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*Be ye therefore wise*, &c. *Wise*, i.e., *prudent*. 1. "That by prudence," says S. Jerome, "ye may avoid snares, and by harmlessness or simplicity ye may do no evil. And the craft of a serpent is given as an example, because with its whole body it hides its head, to protect that wherein is its life. So too let us, by the exposure of our whole body, guard Him who is our Head—Christ; that is, let us strive to keep the faith whole and undefiled." 2. Rabanus Maurus says, that the serpent is wont craftily to choose narrow chinks, so as by passing through them, to put off his old skin. Hear Isidore of Pelusium (lib. i. epist. 26): "The serpent by crafty artifice puts off his old skin, by compressing himself into some narrow chink. So Christ wishes us, by means of the narrow way and affliction, to put off the old man and to put on instead the new man, which is renewed after His image." 3. Remigius says, Beautifully doth the Lord admonish preachers to have the prudence of serpents, because the first man was deceived by a serpent. It was as though He had said, Because the enemy was crafty to deceive, do ye be prudent to deliver. He commended the Tree, do ye praise the virtue of the Cross. Hilary adds, He falsely promised immortality, saying, *Ye shall be as gods;* do ye promise true immortality, that they who believe shall be *as angels*.

4. The serpent has most clear sight. Whence the adage—*the eye of a serpent*. So let an Apostle behold all things with the piercing sight of his mind, that he may avoid what is evil and forward what is good.

*And harmless* (Vulg. *simplices*) *as doves*. Because, as Remigius says, "Simplicity without prudence is easily deceived, and wisdom is dangerous unless it be tempered with simplicity." And as S. Gregory says (lib. iv. epist. 31 ad Mauritium), "As the astuteness of the serpent sharpens the simplicity of the dove, so does the simplicity of the dove temper the astuteness of the serpent."

For *harmless* the Gr. is ἀκέραιοι, which (if it be derived from ἀ, *privative*, and κέρας, *a horn*) means *devoid of malice or harm, innocent, innocuous*. So S. Basil: or if from ἀ, *privative*, and κεράννυμι, *to mingle*, it is the same as *unmixed*, i.e., *pure, sincere*—those who, without prevarication, express with their mouths what they think in

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their hearts. Christ therefore bids them "by prudence avoid snares, by simplicity to do no evil," says S. Jerome.

S. Chrysos. says, anger is not extinguished by anger, but by meekness. It is not enough to bear evils, but we must not even be troubled, which is dove-like.

Theoph. and Euthym. remark that doves, although they be deprived of their young ones, yet return to the same nests and masters. As though Christ said, "So also, O ye Apostles, do not ye remember the injuries done unto you, but meekly and lovingly return ye to those who have vexed and injured you, that ye may help and convert them. This is the ninth precept of Christ. The tenth follows.

*But beware of men*, &c. *Councils*, Gr. συνέδρια, *i.e.*, sessions of magistrates and judges; lest by them ye be condemned as blasphemers of God, or rather of the gods. The *Syriac* has, *They shall deliver you into the house of judgments*, that is, *into the prætoria. Beware of men*—1, false and treacherous men, who shall bring you to councils and before judges. Such are those, who for this cause are to be guarded against by priests at this day in England, Scotland, and Japan; 2, *of men*, *viz.*, insidious men, who lay snares for you by means of perplexing and political questions, that they may catch some word out of your mouth against the laws or sovereigns, that they may accuse you to them; 3, *of men*, *i.e.*, persecutors, who seek to kill you. *Beware*, *i.e.*, bear yourselves cautiously, as far as may be, remembering your duty, so that ye may avoid their plots and treacheries; but above all, that ye fall not by their persecutions and threats so as to deny Christ.

*Moraliter*, let every one learn to beware of himself, for *man is a wolf to man.*

And so no one need say, I have been born in an inauspicious time, I cannot be a martyr. There is no Nero now, no Decius now. Any one can be a martyr if he manfully resist lusts, fears, temptations, for the love of God. Thy cupidity is a Decius to thee, thy fear a Nero, thy temptation is a Julian. Thy companion persecutes thee—laughs at thee—calumniates thee. Fever, cold, asthma, torments

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thee. If thou bear these patiently for the love of God, thou art a martyr of patience, like Job was. Gluttony goads thee to swill in wine and delicacies. Resist, and thou art a martyr of abstinence, like Daniel. Ambition attracts thee to raise thyself above others, to aim at high dignities. Pluck it from thy mind, and thou art a martyr of humility and modesty, like S. Francis. Does thy superior bid thee do hard things, which are repugnant to thy feelings? obey, conquering thyself, and thou art a martyr of obedience, like Abraham, when he offered up Isaac. Does lust titillate thee? Mortify it by fasting, crucify it by hair shirts, and thou wilt be a martyr of chastity, as Joseph was. Study, teach, preach, labour, go to the Indians, that thou mayest save perishing souls, and thou art a martyr of charity, like blessed Xavier.

*And in the synagogues*, where the law was read, and breakers of the law were scourged, *ye shall be beaten*: Thus Peter and the Apostles were beaten (Acts v. 40). And S. Paul says (2 Cor. ii. 24), "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one."

*And before governors, i.e.*, of provinces. So Paul was led as a captive before Felix and Festus, governors of Judea; James the Less before Ananias, the High Priest, by whom he was ordered to be slain; Peter and James the Great before Agrippa, who struck off James' head. Peter and Paul were brought to Nero, under whom they at length underwent a glorious martyrdom. Thus, too, S. Andrew was led to Ægeus, the pro-consul of Achaia, by whom he was crucified; S. John to the Emperor Domitian, by whom he was placed in a cask of boiling oil, from which he gloriously came forth. From such things it will be seen that what Christ now says does not refer to this first sending the Apostles into Judea, for we do not read of any such things happening then, but of things which were to happen in their future life.

*For my sake.* He adds, says S. Chrysostom, an alleviation which was no small consolation, that they should suffer for Christ's sake. Wherefore when the Apostles were beaten, "they went from the Council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

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*for a testimony* of my true faith which ye preach: for of this your martyrdom shall be an illustrious testimony. Hence, many who saw the constancy of the Apostles and Martyrs under their torments were converted to Christ. So S. Hilary.

*But when they shall deliver you*, &c. This is the eleventh precept of Christ, by which he forbids the Apostles being anxious about their answers to the questions of the governors, because He promises that He will Himself suggest to them what they shall be. The Gr. is *μὴ μεριμνήσητε*, i.e., *do not be anxious and solicitous.* He does not forbid their prudently premeditating an answer, but forbids an anxious and troubled care about it. By the martyr in his questionings and torments God must be assiduously invoked that He may inspire him with wisdom to answer, and courage to endure. This is what Luke says Christ promised, *I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist.* Thus it is said of S. Stephen, "They were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit with which he spake." There is a famous example of the literal fulfilment of this promise in the life of Saint Lucy of Syracuse who, when she was ordered by the governor Paschasius to sacrifice to the gods, boldly refused. The prefect said in a threatening tone, "Your words will cease when you come to be scourged." The Virgin answered, "Words can never be wanting to God's servants when the Lord Christ has said, 'When ye stand before kings and governors take no thought how or what ye shall answer, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall say, for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost which speaketh in you.'" Then Paschasius asked her, "Is the Holy Spirit in thee?" She replied, "Those who live chastely and holily are the temple of the Holy Spirit." Then he said, "I will command thee to be taken to the house of shame, and then the Holy Spirit will leave thee." The Virgin answered, "If you order me to suffer violence against my will, my chastity shall receive a double crown." Then Paschasius was inflamed with rage, and commanded her to be led to the house of shame; but by the power of God it came to pass that by no force could the Virgin be removed from the place where she stood. Observe the wonderful prudence of this

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Virgin, who to every question answered wisely, so that the governor was put to silence. Of a truth the Holy Ghost spake in her.

*Tropologically.* S. Austin (lib. iv. De Doctrinâ Christianâ, c. 15) teaches that a preacher ought to pray and study before his sermon: but for the actual time when he is speaking he ought to think that the Lord's words are applicable to a good mind—*Take no thought how or what ye shall speak*, &c.

*Brother shall deliver the brother to death*, &c. Because they believe in Me and preach Me. Christ fortifies beforehand the Apostles and believers by predicting the persecutions which they were about to suffer from their unbelieving relations, who (forgetful of natural ties and affections) would persecute them even unto death. As Bede says, "He foretold the future trouble, in order that, being known beforehand, they might more easily bear it." "For the darts which are seen coming are less likely to strike," says S. Hilary. As examples of the fulfilment of these words, S. Barbara was killed by her own father for the faith of Christ. So, too, was S. Christina. S. Lucia was accused by her own son Euprepius of being a Christian, and was crowned by the judge with the martyr's laurel on the 16th of September, A.D. 303. S. Wenceslas, prince of Bohemia, was treacherously killed by his brother Boleslas and his mother Drahomira, who were unbelievers. The Emperor Maximian caused his sister Artemias, a Christian, and Diocletian, his wife Serena, Pope S. Caius, and his brother S. Gabinus, with his holy daughter Susanna, his cousins, to suffer martyrdom because they were Christians.

*And ye shall be hated of all men*, &c. All—that is, many, almost all, as was wont to be in councils, judgment-halls, and theatres where the martyrs were. For the faith and preaching of Christ crucified was at the first new and paradoxical to the whole world. Wherefore both Jews (who were accustomed to Moses) and Gentiles (who were attached to their gods) rose up against the Apostles, who preached this doctrine, and against the little flock of believers who were converted to it.

*But he that shall endure, i.e.*, in patience. For the Gr. is *ὁ ὑπομείνας, he who shall sustain* these persecutions and adversities

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*even unto the end* at once of his persecutions and his life, *he* wholly and solely *shall be saved.* He shall be endowed with health, happiness, and eternal glory as the reward and crown of his patience. It is not enough to have endured and overcome once, twice, or thrice: but to win the crown we must endure and conquer to the end, according to those words in the Apoc.: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." See what I have there said. Hear S. Bernard (Epis. 129): "Perseverance merits glory for men, a crown for virtues. It is the vigour of strength, the consummation of virtues; it is a nurse of merit, a winner of reward, a sister of patience, a bulwark of sanctity. Take away perseverance, and there is neither reward for obedience, nor grace for well-doing, nor praise for fortitude."

*But when they shall persecute you,* &c.—Flee, "not," says Bede, "from fearing suffering, but by yielding, so that the occasion of tribulation may become the seed of the Gospel," lest by the slaying of the preachers the preaching of the faith should be cut off, but by their fleeing it may be scattered in other places. This flight was indeed victory. For they fled not through fear, but from love to Christ, that they might propagate His faith. So the Tartars, as they flee, cast their darts at their pursuing enemies, and so transfix and slay them.

You will ask whether this be a precept, or only a permission. I reply, it is partly a precept, as when the necessity of the Church, or the faith, or peril of one's own fall, requires flight. For "he does not deny Christ by flying, who flies lest he should deny," says S. Chrysos. So S. Nazian. (Orat. 1 in Julian) and Athanasius (de fugâ suâ), For had he not fled from the rage of the Arians, they would have triumphed over the Homoousian faith, which seemed to stand or fall with Athanasius. It is partly of counsel, as when greater benefit is expected for oneself or others from flight. It is partly a permission, as when any one has an excessive dread of torments; and he is not bound by any necessity or obligation (as being a bishop or pastor, for example) to remain in a particular place. For otherwise it is unlawful to flee if peril, or scandal, be likely to accrue

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to the Faith, the Sacraments, or the Sheep, *i.e.*, the faithful. This is plain from John x. 11, 12.

Hence the example of Christ, of His Apostles, of S. Athanasius and others is a refutation of Tertullian who in his book, *de Fugâ*, contends that flight is unlawful. S. Jer. (*in Catal. Scriptor. Ecclesiast. in Tertul.*) shews that this book was one of those which he wrote against the Church after he became a heretic and a Montanist.

*Verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over*, &c. The Gr. is οὐ μὴ τελέσητε, *ye shall not have finished*, that is, *traversing* and converting *the cities of Israel*. 1. S. Chrysos, explains it of the first mission of the Apostles into Judea; as much as to say, flee from the city where they persecute into another; for ye shall not have gone over all the cities of Palestine until I shall return to you, and recall you to me. But in this first mission the Apostles were kindly received by the Jews, so that there was no need for them to flee. They came back to Christ rejoicing, as we see by Luke x. 17.

2. Bede expounds thus, "Ye shall not have converted the Jews before my resurrection. After that I will return to you and send you to the Gentiles dispersed throughout the world, where you shall have a perpetual field for your labours."

3. Others say, "Ye shall not have gone over Judea, preaching and fleeing away until I return to it in vengeance by means of Vespasian and Titus, that I may cut off the Jews who have persecuted you."

4. And correctly, "Ye shall not, by journeying and preaching, perfect in the faith of the Gospel and the religion of Christ, the cities, that is the people of Israel, to whom I am now sending you before the second advent of the Son of Man." For as S. Paul teaches in Romans xi., it behoveth that the fulness of the Gentiles, *i.e.*, all the Gentiles must come first into the Church, and *then* all Israel shall be saved. Christ intimates that the Jews shall disbelieve the Gospel until the end of the world, but then, a little before the judgment, they will be converted by Enoch and Elias. So S. Hilary.

Thus far are the precepts which Christ gave to His Apostles. There now follow promises and inducements by which He animates them generously to rise superior to persecutions. The first induce-

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ment is Christ himself (ver. 24), who suffered more from the Jews than they would. The second is in ver. 26, that God, after the persecutions would make manifest the truth of the Gospel to the glory of Christ and the Apostles. Thirdly, in ver. 28, that God who is the Lord of the soul is rather to be feared than the persecutor of the body. Fourth, in ver. 29. Because God has a special care for them. Fifth, ver. 32. Because God will honour them in the presence of the angels and glorify them eternally.

*The disciple*, &c. Christ here animates His disciples to bear persecutions, says S. Chrys. by His own example. The disciple and the servant, such as ye are to Me, O ye Apostles, ought not to seek for greater honour and applause of men than his Master has.

*It is enough for the disciple*, &c. That is to say, if the Jews have derided and caluminated Me, and called Me Beelzebub, *i.e.*, a friend and associate of Beelzebub—Me, who am Christ your Master and Lord, yea the Head of your family—if, I say, they have dared to do such things against Me, who have proved Myself by so many miracles to be Messiah and the Son of God, how much more will they dare to do like things to you, My disciples and servants! And if I quietly and bravely bear such things from them, how much rather ought ye to bear these things, yea even rejoice in them, because ye bear them for My sake, and in bearing them are made like unto me, and are, as it were, adorned with My raiment and My ornaments!

Hear what S. Hilary says upon this passage, "Let no kind of injuries, or reproaches in any wise affright us; but let us rather embrace them as our glory, if only we may be made conformable to our Lord and His sufferings." And as Tertullian says (*lib. de bono Martyrii, c.* 9.) "Since the Lord and Master Himself has suffered persecution, betrayal and death, how much more ought His disciples and servants to fulfil the same things, lest they should seem to be superior to Him in being exempt from evil; since this ought to suffice them for glory that they are made conformable to the sufferings of their Lord and Master." Whence S. Ambrose says (*lib.* 2, *de Abraham, c.* 7.) "The soul going forth to war bears not



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before her the likenesses of eagles or dragons; but in the cross of Christ and in the name of Jesus she goes out to battle, strong with this sign, faithful to this standard."

S. Jerome (*Epist.* 39, *ad. Marcel.*) speaking of Blesilla, the daughter of S. Paula, who after the death of her husband became a nun, and was derided by the world, writes, "Our Blesilla will laugh, and will count it no disgrace to hear the revilings of croaking frogs, when her Master was called Beelzebub."

You will ask who and what was Beelzebub? He was the god and idol of the Ekronites. See 2 Kin. i. 2, 3, 6. He is so called from *Baal zebub*, i.e., *the lord of the fly*, or *possessing flies*, because he was worshipped and invoked against the pest of flies. Thus among the Greeks, Jupiter had the title of ἀπόμυος, or *averter of flies*, because they worshipped him that he might drive away flies. Thus the inhabitants of Cyrene when swarms of flies brought a pestilence, invoked the god Achor to drive them away, as Pliny tells us (*lib.* 8, *c.* 28). This idol Beelzebub seems also to have had the head of a fly. For the *Sept.* translates Beelzebub, the *Lord Fly*. Similarly the Egyptians represented the god Apis with the head and figure of an ox, Anubis of a dog, Hammon of a ram, and so on. Hence the Jews called Lucifer the prince of the devils, partly in derision partly from abomination, the Fly God, or the god of flies. I say more upon Beelzebub on 2 Kin. i. ver. 2.

The Gr. codices in this place, as well as in Mar. iii. 22, and Lu. xi. 15, 18, 19, also Theophyl. and others, always read Beelzebub, which some interpret to mean, *Jupiter stercorarius*, or the *dungy Jove*: for though *zebal* in Hebrew means *a habitation*, *zebel* in Chald., Syriac, and Arabic, signifies *dung*, because the devil is, by reason of sin, most unclean, and so stirs men up to commit all uncleanness, especially the sins of drunkenness and impurity. This is perhaps the origin of the name *zebulus*, or *zabulus* which S. Hilary and others of the ancients give to the devil, unless you prefer to derive it from the Æolic *za* for διὰ, that is, *zabulus* instead of *diabolus*.

*Fear them not therefore*, &c. The Gr. is a beautiful paronomasia,

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or pun. *There is nothing hid which shall not be unhid, nothing covered which shall not be uncovered.*

The meaning is, "Although the Jews slander you as being not of God, but the Apostles and ambassadors of Beelzebub, yet fear ye not their derision or contempt, for God will in the end make plain your innocence and true religion, not only in the day of judgment, but even in this life." So S. Chrysos.

It might also be explained thus—"Do not fear or shrink, O My Apostles from preaching My Gospel, for although but few may believe in the beginning, that it may appear hidden and concealed, yet it shall creep on by degrees, and its truth shall at length be known, and shall shine forth through the world."

Hear S. Ambr. (*lib. de Jacob. et vit. beat. c.* 8), "It is the part of a perfect man not to succumb to those things which seem to most, terrible and dreadful, but like a brave soldier to sustain the onset of the severest troubles. Thus S. Vincent acted when in his torments, he answered back the tyrant, "Thou shalt see that I have more power when I am tormented than thou hast when thou art tormenting." So too the Apostles shone the more brightly in the darkness of persecution. Of their virtue S. Bernard speaks (*Serm.* xxvii. *in Cant.*), "As stars shine in the night, but are unseen by day, so does true virtue, which in prosperity often appears not, become conspicuous in adversity."

*What I say unto you*, &c. Since the roofs of the houses in Judea are flat, it was possible to preach from them as from a lofty pulpit. S. Jerome gives a threefold meaning. 1. What ye have heard in a mystery, that preach ye plainly. 2. What ye have learned in secret, that speak ye in public. 3. What I have taught you in this one corner of Judea, boldly evangelize to the whole world.

*Mystically*, S. Austin, "What I say in darkness, *i.e.*, in fear, preach ye in the light, *i.e.*, in the confidence of the truth."

*And fear not them which kill*, &c. Do not, from fear of death with which the persecutors threaten you, deny My faith, or cease from the preaching which I have commanded you, for if ye do this, ye will incur the far worse death of the soul, even its eternal death



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in hell. Truly does S. Chrys. say (*Hom.* 5 *ad pop.*) "He who is always afraid of hell will never fall into its flames."

This saying of Christ has reference to a most needful precept. He bids us that we must not, through fear of tyrants, break the faith which we have pledged to God, nor violate His law. It may be further extended to things which are counselled, not commanded; but then it is a matter of counsel, not of precept. Thus Pope S. Clement extended it to the counsel of virginity. When SS. Nereus and Achilleus, the servants of S. Flavia Domitilla, who had been betrothed to Aurelian the son of the Roman consul, counselled her to embrace virginity, and asked S. Clement to give her the veil, he answered bravely, "For you, for her, and for me, I perceive there is prepared the palm of martyrdom. But forasmuch as Christ has laid it down that we must not fear them which kill the body, let us disregard mortals, that we may plainly and wholly obey the Author of everlasting life." He therefore consecrated Domitilla, a virgin; which when Aurelian her betrothed heard, he beheaded SS. Nereus and Achilleus, and banished S. Domitilla to Pontus, where she completed her martyrdom by fire. At last S. Clement, being drowned in the sea, obtained the same palm. Thus were there four glorious victims of virginity. And the heroism of their action consisted in this—that it would have been lawful for them to persuade Domitilla to avoid the persecution by marrying Aurelian. But the love of chastity and of Christ gained the victory.

Victorinus of Utica (*lib.* 3. *Wandal. persecut.*) relates that a matron named Dionysia, when she was exposed naked upon a lofty place and beaten with rods by the Arians, bravely answered, "Ye servants of the devil, that which ye think ye do to my shame is indeed my praise." And when she beheld her only son, a little child turn pale at the torments, she animated him by reminding him of hell, lest the King should say to his servants, "Cast him into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "That is the life," she said, "to be desired which is always in possession." And strengthening her child with these words, she soon made him a martyr. Thus far Victor. He relates in the same place

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that Victorianus, the proconsul of Carthage, being asked by the ambassadors of King Hunneric to become an Arian, answered, "Being firm in God and Christ my Lord, I will tell ye what ye shall answer to your king: 'Let him torment me with fire, let him expose me to beasts, let him excruciate me with every kind of torment; if I should consent unto him, it would be in vain that I have been baptized into the Catholic Church. For if this present life were all, and we did not hope for another which is indeed eternal, still even so, I would not do what he requires for the sake of a little temporal glory, and be ungrateful to Him who hath bestowed His faith upon me who believe in Him.' At this reply the King was so enraged that no speech can express for how long and with what punishments he afflicted him. But he triumphing, and making in the Lord a happy consummation, received the martyr's crown." Thus Victor. Wisely spoke the martyr S. Flavian, "The body does not feel torments when the mind is in heaven, and has devoted itself to God with all its strength."

*Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing*, &c. *Farthing*, this is the Roman *as*, Gr. *assarion*. It is a diminutive, and means *a little as*. For the *assarius* was the half, not of the ancient *as*, which was a pound, but of the later *as*, which was half an ounce. So that the *assarius* was the fourth part of the *uncia*, or *ounce* of brass, and therefore of very small value. This, which Enthym. renders by *terunciola*, or *a little farthing* was the price of two sparrows in Judea in the time of Christ.

*Shall not fall upon the earth.* For birds live in the air, and when they are pierced with arrows, or perish from any other cause, they fall to the earth. *Without your Father*: *i.e.*, without His providence and pleasure. If God hath so great care and providence of these little sparrows, what will he have of you? For He is your Father, in that he hath given you reason, for similitude to Himself. And He hath re-formed you in Christ, and made you like unto Christ.

*Symbolically*, S. Hilary says: "The two sparrows are the body and the soul, which are born as it were sparrows, that they should fly with spiritual wings toward Heaven, but the sinner sells them for an *as*,

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that is, a little pleasure, to the devil, that they may go down to hell."

*But the hairs of your head*, &c. That is, God from eternity hath appointed and decreed not only the number of your members, but even of your hairs. Wherefore He knows it exactly, and diligently keeps them to the number which He willeth, so that not one can fall without His special providence, as Luke saith.

*Allegorically*, the hairs of Christ are all the elect and those who shall be saved, for these adorn Christ as hair does the head. *Tropologically*, hairs are all the thoughts, words, and deeds of the faithful. So S. Cyril (*lib.* 8 *in Levit.*). Again, hairs are the minutest thoughts and intentions of the Saints. So Damascene.

*Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value*, Syr. *more excellent.* The Gr. is διαφέρετε *ye are preferable, ye excel.* If God have such care of sparrows, much more will he have of you, Wherefore, rest secure in the fatherly bosom of His Providence in all persecutions and tribulations whatsoever. For He will deliver you out of them all, either by freeing you from them, or else by giving you the crown of martyrdom, and taking you to heaven, where there will be no more labour or pain.

*Whosoever therefore shall confess Me*, &c. From this word *confess*, martyrs were anciently called *confessors*. *Shall confess Me.* The Gr. is ἐν ἐμοὶ, i.e., *in Me.* For *I will confess him*, the Gr. is ἐν αὐτῷ, i.e., *in him.* And so Tertullian reads (*in Scorpiace c.* 9). So also S. Luke xii. 5. It is a Hebraism. For the Heb. constructs verbs of contact, whether bodily, mental, or spiritual contact, with the prep. ב, *in*. The Heb. would be *hoda bi, confess in Me*, meaning *confess Me.* This is plain from the antithesis, *shall deny Me.* Maldonatus, however, takes it differently = *shall confess*, i e., *shall glory in Me*, answering to the Heb. *hithraddeh*, which, being in the *Hithpael*, has a reflexive force. *To confess in oneself*, i.e., *to glory.*

The meaning is, whosoever, in the presence of tyrants, being interrogated concerning the faith, shall generously and constantly confess that he believeth in Me as the Messiah and the Son of God, him will I in like manner profess before God, and angels, and men, to be My disciple, and as such will I honour and glorify him.

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Martyrdom is the confession of Christ and the profession of Christianity, even to torments and a cruel death, and therefore it is the highest love and honouring of Christ. Wherefore the Apostles and Apostolic men have most ardently desired martyrdom. S. Ignatius in his Epistle to the Romans, says, "My love is crucified. There is not in me a fire of earthly, but of heavenly fuel. And I have living water which saith inwardly, Come to the Father." S. Basil says (*Hom.* 19 *in S. Gordium, Mart.*), "The martyrs speedily attain to heavenly glory by a violent and premature death. They endeavour speedily to migrate from this life, which ought rather to be called a lingering death, by means of short toil." We see, therefore, that he does not call death *death*, but as S. Sophia said to her daughter Anastasia (*apud Surium, Octob.* 25), "A good thing is departure from an evil world. It is joy, gladness, pleasure, splendour, beauty, light, a sweeter and fairer than earthly light." S. Anthony, as S. Athanasius testifies, when those who were about to become martyrs in the persecution of Maximian were being carried to Alexandria, rushed out of his monastery, and followed these victims of Christ, saying, "Let us advance to the glorious triumphs of our brethren, that we may join them in their conflict."

Tertullian thus concludes his apology in behalf of Christ and Christians—"Well, then, do this, O ye excellent governors, since ye will be so much more acceptable to the populace, when ye have sacrificed the Christians to them. Crucify, torment, condemn us, tear our bodies to pieces. Your wickedness is the sure proof of our innocency. God has a meaning in allowing us to suffer. For when ye condemn a Christian woman to pollution rather than to a lion, ye confess that a stain upon modesty is reckoned by us to be far more dreadful than any death. And still all your most exquisite cruelties produce no effect; they only induce men to join us. We are multiplied as often as you reap us. The blood of the Christians is their seed."

This same Tertullian wrote his *Scorpiace* against the Gnostics, who taught that it was permitted under torture to deny Christ with the mouth, so long as His faith were retained in the heart. The Priscillianists afterwards taught the same, whose motto was, "Rights,

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perjuries, secrets, betray not." In the *Scorpiace, i.e.*, an antidote against scorpions, meaning Gnostics, Tertullian treats altogether of the good of martyrdom. S. Cyprian, too, following Tertullian as a master, according to his wont, wonderfully extols the martyrs and martyrdom. In his *Epistle to the Martyrs*, among other eulogiums, he scatters the following: "The martyr is made a colleague of the Passion of Christ. The martyrs give us a school of morals: the confessors shew us the beginning of virtues. The martyrs shall be assessors with Christ in the judgment. The martyrs obtain the kingdom of heaven without delay. The martyrs receive fruit a hundredfold. The prayer of the martyrs deserves to be heard by God. By the triumphs of the martyrs the church is made glad. Martyrdom by the baptism of blood is of all things the most excellent."

Lastly, the Standard Bearer, the Prince and the Captain of the Martyrs, is Christ. Wherefore, the primitive bishops and fathers, as Julian the Apostate unwillingly acknowledged, "All flew to martyrdom like bees to a bee-hive," to use S. Chrysostom's words. S. Hubert, the successor of S. Lambert the martyr in the see of Liege, was wont to sigh because he was not his successor in martyrdom likewise. "O unhappy I," he said, "whose sins have accumulated in such a heap that I am not worthy to be associated with such a man."

I have collected many more notes upon Martyrdom in Hosea, c. xi. *sub finem*. See also Victor of Utica on the Vandal persecution (*lib.* 2, 3), where he relates that when many of the orthodox were thrust by Hunneric, the Arian king, like swarms of locusts, into a narrow dungeon, full of every kind of filth, where the horror of the overpowering stench was worse than any torture, even here the Martyrs sang with exultation this hymn to the Lord, "Such honour have all His Saints."

*Think not that I am come*, &c., that is to say, *earthly peace:* for Christ promised by Isaiah (ix. 6 *and* 7, *and* lxv. 25), that He would bring spiritual peace of mind, the peace of the union of the faithful among themselves, and with God and His Angels, which leads to peace and everlasting felicity in Heaven.

*But a sword:* i.e., *separation*, as S. Luke has (xii. 51), *discord* in

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faith and religion. He means that He will separate His faithful people by reason of their faith from unbelievers. But the unbelievers will on their part take occasion to separate themselves from the faithful, and will hate them, and will deprive them of liberty and goods and life. This is what Christ especially refers to in what follows; and this too entirely answers to the words of Micah (vii. 6) from which Christ here quotes.

*I am come to separate*, &c. *A man's foes shall be they of his own household.* Syriac. *A man shall have as his enemies the sons of his own house.* Because, as S. Chrys. says (*Hom.* 2, *cont. Judæos*), it shall come to pass that in the same house there shall be one faithful believer in Christ, whilst another shall continue unbelieving. A father will wish his son to return back from the faith to his former impiety. Foretelling this He saith, *I am come to separate.* Such shall be the victorious power of the Gospel that sons shall disregard their parents, daughters their mothers, and parents their children, and shall adventure their life and all things for the sake of godliness. Some are of opinion that Christ only *applies* the passage of Micah, using it in a different sense. But I reply that Micah was speaking literally of the calamity of sinful Jerusalem through the siege of the Chaldeans, as S. Jerome shows—that in it the inhabitants should be so distressed by sword and famine and pestilence that even brother would snatch away bread from brother, child from parent, wife from husband. But, allegorically this strife of the Jews signifies the discord and opposition of unbelieving parents and brethren and husbands against believers, whether Jews, or Gentiles in the time of Christ, especially when the faithful ran into peril of goods and fame, and even life itself. In this allegorical sense Christ cites Micah's words: and in an allegory, or parable it is not necessary to apply every word.

*He that loveth father*, &c. That is, is not worthy to have Me for his Lord and Master, is not worthy of My name and company, My grace and kingdom, and the rest of My promises. The reason is, because Christ forasmuch as He is our God and Lord and Saviour, must be far preferred to parents and children. Wherefore he who prefers them to Christ so as for their sakes to revolt from the faith of

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Christ, treats Him unworthily, and does Him the highest dishonour. So S. Jerome and others. S. Saturus, when Hunneric threatened him that unless he became an Arian, he would give his wife in marriage to his camel driver, and when his wife, trembling at this, besought him to consent unto the king, answered like another Job, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. I should dread it, O woman, if there were nothing but the bitter sweetness of this life. Thou ministerest, O my wife to the artifices of the devil. If thou lovedst thy spouse, thou wouldst never drag thine own husband to the second death. Let them tear away my children, let them separate my wife, let them take away my substance, yet will I rest secure upon the promises of my Lord. I will hold fast the words, 'Whosoever forsaketh not wife, or children, or lands, or houses, he cannot be My disciple.'" So Victor of Utica.

*And he that taketh not* (from the hand of the Lord upon his shoulders to bear it like Christ.) *his cross*, &c. *To bear the cross* is to be ready for the sake of Christ to bear reproaches, stripes, imprisonments, and the most painful and ignominious death, such as was the death of the cross, which Christ vouchsafed to bear for us. Because, as S. Chrys. says, speaking in the name of Christ "As I have brought you the utmost blessedness; so I ask of you a singular obedience and affection, that ye may be as lions in battle array." Christ alludes to His future bearing of His own Cross. For it is altogether just and right, that after Christ bearing His cross for us, we also should follow Him, bearing our cross with love and reverence, and thus walk towards heaven. This is the exact literal sense.

*Mystically*, the Cross is mortification. Listen to the Gloss, "The Cross is borne in two ways, either when the body is affected by abstinence, or when the mind is touched with compassion for one's neighbour. Their neighbours' sins are an instrument of torture to the Saints."

Lastly, S. Jerome says, "It is written in another Gospel, *He that taketh not his Cross daily*, lest we should suppose that a burning faith would suffice once for all: the Cross must be always carried, that we may show that we always love Christ."

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*He that findeth his life*, &c. *Findeth* ought to be in the past tense; for the Gr. is (ὁ εὑρὼν). The meaning is, He that findeth his life (ψυχὴν), that is, the corporeal safety of his life, when in peril of death, through denial of the faith, and of My name, such a one shall lose his soul (ψυχὴν), that is, the eternal salvation of his soul, which alone is real safety, and shall go away into hell. And, on the other hand, he who shall lose the present life of his soul (ψυχὴς), or his life, on account of his profession of My name, he shall find health and safety, and the eternal happiness and glory of his soul (ψυχὴν), or life.

He therefore who indulges his soul, loses it: he who mortifies it, saves it. See the paradox which there is here. Life is made to consist in death, and death in life. Whence Tertullian says in his *Scorpiace*, "God hath willed to destroy death by death, to shake off torments by torments, to give life by taking it away, to heal the flesh by wounding it, to save the soul by casting it away."

Observe the Heb. is *matsa*, i.e., *he hath found*. Understand, *he hath acquired, he hath gotten, he hath obtained*, as the LXX. trans. in Job iii. 22: and the Vulg. in i. Sam. xxxi. 3. Similarly the Gr. εὑρίσκω, literally, *I light upon*, frequently means, *I obtain, rescue, I deliver*, &c. The Latin *invenire*, lit. *to come upon*, means *to acquire or obtain anything*. Thus any one is said to *find*, that is to *obtain* grace, favour, praise. So Gabriel said to the Blessed Virgin, Thou hast found favour, or grace with God, *i.e.*, Thou hast come into favour with God: thou hast gained the love of God. In Gen. xxvi. 12, it is said, "Isaac sowed in that land, and found, *i.e.*, gained in that same year a hundredfold." (*Vulg.*) For what any one finds sprung up in his field, that he gains. So here, He that findeth his life, that is, who gains it when it is as it were lost, and causes it as though to come to him afresh by denying Christ, this man shall lose it in another and a better life.

Again, *matsa*, he hath *found*, denotes liberty, sufficiency, abundance, power. So in Ps. xxi. 9, "Let Thy hand be found by all Thine enemies." (*Vulg.*) That is, let it suffice, let it be stronger and more powerful than Thine enemies. So here to *find the soul* is to acquire the liberty of the soul (*anima*), *i.e.*, of the life, and abundance of pos-

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sessions, by denying the faith. For this was what kings and tyrants were wont to promise to those who would deny Christ.

*He that receiveth you*, &c. For he who receiveth an ambassador, in the ambassador receiveth the king who hath sent him. The Apostles were the ambassadors of Christ, and Christ of God. He, therefore, who receiveth them, receiveth Christ in them, and in Christ, God Himself—according to these words of S. Paul—"We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us." And again, in the Epistle to the Galatians, "Ye did not reject me, but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." Christ here proposes the rewards of those who should receive the Apostles, that He may make provision for the Apostles in the poverty which He commanded them to observe—as, for instance, when they were preaching, that He might strengthen them in it, and might invite hosts to show them liberal hospitality.

*He that receiveth a prophet*, &c. *A prophet*, *i.e.*, a teacher and preacher of the Gospel such as the Apostles were. For formerly the office of the prophets was not only to predict future events, but to teach the people, and preach the law and word of God.

*Shall receive a prophet's reward, or hire* (*merces*, Vulg.) Some explain this as though *reward from a prophet:* and that far surpassing the hospitality which they have shown, because they shall receive from the prophet the grace and faith of Christ, and the benefit of the prophet's prayers.

2. Euthymius. *A prophet's reward—i.e.*, shall be equal to a prophet in his reward, shall be accounted worthy of equal honours with him.

3. And best. *Shall receive*, &c., because as he co-operates with the prophet, and assists him because he is a prophet and a preacher, so shall he be partaker of his labour, his merit, and his reward, and yet not in equal degree, but proportionably with the prophet, according to the co-operation and love with which he co-operates with the preacher. For so by common law the receivers of thieves and robbers are awarded similar (though not equal) punishment with the thieves themselves. Thus S. Chrysostom explains: "He shall receive that reward of a prophet which it is fitting that he should

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receive who receives a prophet." S. Gregory (*Hom.* 20 *in Evang.*) says the same. Although the elm bears no fruit of itself, yet it supports the vine with its grapes: thus she makes her own what she kindly sustains of another's.

The same rule is indicated by the old law of war. "There shall be an equal share to him who goeth down into the battle with him who remaineth by the baggage. They shall alike divide the spoils." (1 Sam. xxx. 24). *A prophet's reward*, then, is that he shall receive the reward of his prophecy, or his preaching, because he assisted and promoted it; for without that assistance the preacher could not have preached, forasmuch as he would have lacked food.

Lastly, by *a prophet's reward* some understand the gift of prophecy; which S. Jerome (*On Obadiah*) thinks the prophet Obadiah obtained because he fed the prophets with bread and water in Jezebel's persecution. "Forasmuch as he nourished a hundred prophets, he received the grace of prophecy, and from a prince became a general of the Church's army. He fed at that time a little flock in Samaria; now he feeds the churches of Christ throughout all the world." S. Epiphanius, S. Isidore, and others think the same, though it is more probable that the Obadiah of 1 Kin. 18 and the fourth of the Minor Prophets were different persons, as I have shown in the preface to Obadiah.

*He that receiveth a righteous man*, &c. In the same way as I have said of a prophet. Yea, though such a one shall be in sin, he shall receive the grace of repentance, and shall be made righteous. For to this men are often brought by the word and example of saints who are their guests, who obtain the grace of repentance by their prayers. So S. Francis, being received by a soldier to hospitality, foretold his speedy death, persuaded him to make his confession, and obtained from God his eternal salvation. For as soon as the soldier had confessed, he expired. (See S. Bonaventura, in his Life, c. 11.)

*And whosoever shall give to drink*, &c. *Cold water*, as the cheapest of all things, and within the competence of the poorest to bestow. He does not say, says S. Jerome, *warm water*, lest any one should

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make the want of fuel an excuse. And he does not speak of a goblet, or a flagon, but He says a cup, or glass. For who is so poor that he could not give, or at least carry, a cup of water? S. Augustine gives the same explanation.

*In the name of a disciple, i.e.*, because he is My disciple, because he adheres to My teaching, and believes in Me. For this having respect to Christ, ennobles and exalts both the intention of the giver and the work itself; that which is given to a Christian, Christ esteems as bestowed upon Himself, and as such recompenses it with a great reward. For if you should do the same work for a different reason, because the person benefited is your servant, or relation, or friend, the deed is of little or no merit in the eyes of God. For this would be an alms, or an act of natural pity; but the former an act of supernatural mercy. So theologians and Suarez (*lib. 2, de necessitat. gratiæ, c.* xvi. 10). By these words of Christ it is intimated that a work of mercy done to a man only because he is a man, is of the natural order: but if it be done because he is a believer, a fellow citizen with the saints, and of the household of God, it is a work of mercy of a higher, that is, of a supernatural order.

An illustrious example of this occurs in the life of S. Anastasia, V. and M. After her tongue had been cut off (Lat. *præscinderetur*), and her teeth knocked out, being athirst, she asked for water (*poposcit*). A certain man named Cyril gave her to drink, and by that one cup of cold water purchased the crown of martyrdom. For when Probus the governor understood that he had done this for a Christian woman because he was a Christian, he sent him to a martyr's death.

From these words of Christ some theologians (with Suarez) gather as probable, that grace in a just man is increased by remisser acts: as if, for example, a just man should have intense degrees of grace, say as eight, but should perform an act of almsgiving, by giving, for example, a cup of cold water to a poor man in a remiss kind of way —say as three—by which act he would nevertheless acquire an augmentation of his habitual intense grace as eight, by three additional grades, so that it would be intensified, or extended as eleven. See

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the full discussion of this question in Suarez (Tom. 3 *de Gratia*, lib. 9, cap. 3, nu. 36).

Lastly, Christ here signifies that no work, however small, done to a preacher, shall go without its reward. Of this nature are those remiss works which just men do in great abundance. And they would lose the reward of very many of their works, were it not that remiss works increase the more intense grace; for few Christians perform acts so intense that they equal, or exceed the habit; and Christ here teaches that they do not lose their reward.

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## CHAPTER XI.

*2 John sendeth his disciples to Christ. 7 Christ's testimony concerning John. 18 The opinion of the people, both concerning John and Christ. 20 Christ upbraideth the unthankfulness and unrepentance of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. 25 and praising his Father's wisdom in revealing the gospel to the simple. 28 he calleth to him all such as feel the burden of their sins.*

AND it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed then to teach and to preach in their cities.

2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

6 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

7 ¶ And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses.

9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

10 For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come.

15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

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16 ¶ But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

20 ¶ Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 ¶ At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.

28 ¶ Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

*And it came to pass*, &c. *He passed from thence:* That means, He separated Himself from His Apostles, whom He sent to preach the Gospel by themselves, both that they might prepare the way for Christ who was about to follow them, and that they might make trial of themselves and their courage in this Mission, being separated from their Master. What the Apostles did when thus sent forth by Christ, S. Matthew is silent upon, but S. Luke relates it (ix. 6), and so does S. Mark (vi. 12).

*That they should teach and preach in their cities: i.e.*, in the cities of the Jews and the Galilæans, to whom He sent them. Note the Hebraism here. For the Heb. frequently leaves unexpressed the



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antecedent of the relative, or demonstrative pronoun, but leaves it to be understood from the circumstances of the case by the reader or hearer. There are similar instances to be found in Psalms xcix. 8, 2 Kings xvii. 24, &c.

*When John had heard in the prison*, Vulg. *in chains. When He had heard from His disciples*, as Luke says (vii. 18), from whence it is equally plain that there is here a hysterlogia, and that what S. Matthew here relates concerning John, from the 2nd to the 20th verse, happened before the Mission of the Apostles, to which he himself referred.

*In chains*, Syr. *in the house of those who are bound*, that is when Herod had shut him up because he reproved his adultery with Herodias.

John then, a little before his martyrdom, sent these disciples to Christ in the thirty-second year of Christ's age, which was the second year of His preaching, when He was becoming famous by His doctrine and miracles, that they might learn from Himself that He was the very Messiah, or Christ, that when John was dead they might go to Him. For otherwise they might have made a schism from Christ, and preferred John as their master to Christ. For that they thought more highly of John than of Christ is plain from Matt. ix. 14. As therefore the runners in the Stadium hand on the lamp to the runner who succeeds them in the course, so did John—when he had fulfilled his office and ministry, resign it to Christ. And, as the dayspring dies away into the rising sun, so did John pale before Christ. For John was the morning star of the sun of righteousness. Wherefore, not only did he not envy Christ His rising glory when his own was setting, but rejoiced at it. Yea, he desired to set, that Christ might arise, for he was ambitious not of his own glory, but of God's and Christ's glory. Wherefore he said, "It behoveth Him to increase, but me to decrease."

*And saith*, &c. *He that should come*, Gr. ὁ ἐρχόμενος, *the coming one*, namely, that great Prophet, the Redeemer of Israel, the Saviour of the World, the Messias promised by all the Prophets, and most ardently longed for by the Fathers, who at this time, now that the

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prophecies concerning Him are fulfilled, is by all looked for as coming. He alludes to the prophecy of the Patriarch Jacob, "The sceptre shall not be taken away from Judah," &c. Gen. xlix. 10.

From these words of John, Tertullian (*De Baptism*, c. 10) and Justin (*Quest.* 38 *ad Orthodox*) think that John doubted concerning Jesus whether He were the Christ or not, but falsely, for John had already seen the Spirit descending upon Him in the form of a dove, and had heard the Father's voice saying, This is my beloved Son. And John had already given the clearest testimony to Him, when he said, Behold the Lamb of God.

Others think that John did not doubt whether Jesus were the Christ, but only asked whether, after death, He would come into Limbus, and visit and deliver the Fathers who were detained there. So S. Jerome, "He did not say, Art Thou He who hast come, but art Thou He who wilt come?. And the meaning is, Tell me, since I am about to descend into Hades, whether also I shall announce Thee to the shades below, as I have announced Thee in the upper world? Or, is it not fitting that the Son of God should taste of death, and wilt Thou send another for these mysteries?" So, too, S. Gregory. But this opinion is little apposite or probable.

I say, therefore, that John sends his disciples, and asks Jesus whether He be the Coming One, *i.e.*, the Messias, not as doubting about Him, but because, being near death, he wished his hesitating disciples to be instructed concerning Him, that they might be led to Christ. So SS. Hil., Chrys., Cyril. Observe, too, the prudence of S. John. He in his own name asks Jesus if He be the Christ, because his disciples would not, of themselves, have dared to propose such a question. For he is the best physician who, to cure a sick man, acts as though he were sick himself, and takes nauseous medicine. So S. Paul says, "Who is weak, and I am not weak?"

*And Jesus answering*, &c. These miracles which ye have seen Me perform are the marks of the true Messiah, given by Isai. xxxv. 5, and lxi. 1. This is why S. Luke adds, *In the selfsame hour He healed many of their diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and to many that were blind He gave sight.* For neither Elijah, nor Elisha, nor any



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other prophet did so many and such great miracles as Christ. Wherefore S. Cyril (*lib. 2 Thesaur.* c. 4) says, "Christ, both by the greatness and the multitude of His miracles, shewed Himself to be the Messiah." You may add, by His beneficence. For although Moses shewed many miracles in the ten plagues of Egypt, yet did he not heal the Egyptians, but afflicted and slew them. But "Christ went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." Wherefore His hands are said to be "versatile" (Cant. v. 14, Vulg.), that is, active in doing good to all; and "full of hyacinths" (Vulg.), *i.e.*, of heavenly works, miracles and kindnesses.

*The blind see*, &c. He alludes to Is. xxxv. 4. "Our God Himself shall come and save us." (Vulg.): "then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, &c." Also to Is. lxi. 1.

*The poor have the Gospel preached*, &c. Theophylact and Euthym. take the verb εὐαγγελίζονται, actively, meaning, *the poor Apostles preach the Gospel.* But the verb is passive, and so the Syriac translates it. The meaning is, "I evangelize the poor, I preach the Gospel to them, and they receive it eagerly, though the rich reject it." He alludes to, indeed he quotes, Is. lxi. 1, "He hath sent me to announce to the meek," where the LXX., instead of *anavim, the meek*, read *aniim, the poor:* and trans., *He hath sent me to evangelize the poor*, not the poor by necessity, but those who are poor in spirit, and consequently, meek and gentle. More simply, by *the poor*, you may understand such as the Apostles and the multitudes. For Christ preached to them that He might shew that the souls of the poor are equally precious before God with those of the rich; and therefore God made both equal in the Gospel. Dost thou then wish to imitate Christ? Teach the poor, guide, solace, help them.

*And blessed is he*, &c., *i.e.*, who shall not be offended at my lowly conversation. The Syriac is, *Blessed is he who shall not stumble at Me.* For as S. Greg. says (Hom. vi.), "I do indeed marvellous things, but I do not disdain to suffer shameful things." There is a tacit reference to the disciples of John, who were offended at His lowliness; and He intimates that he beheld the secrets of their hearts. So S. Jerome says, "He aims not at John, but at his disciples." And S.

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Hilary says, "Because the cross was about to be a stumbling block to many, Christ pronounced them blessed to whom His cross, His death, His burial, would bring no trial of their faith."

*And as they were going away.* (Gr. and Vulg.) That the multitude might not think that Christ was flattering John, and aiming at His favour, as S. Chrys. says, if He had praised him in the presence of his disciples: therefore He permitted them to depart, and then He praised him.

*Jesus began to say*, &c. *Shaken*, Gr. σαλευόμενον, *waving and fluctuating*, like a wave of the sea. By a similar metaphor we speak of the corn waving, when impelled to and fro by the wind. Christ would remove any suspicion which might arise among the people from this message of John, that he had changed his opinion concerning Christ—that whereas he had formerly thought him to be the Messiah, he had now changed his opinion, and had sent his disciples to interrogate Him, because he was in doubt about him. So Jesus, as it were said, "Suppose not, O ye Jews, that John thinks any other of Me than he thought before. For John is not a reed to be shaken backwards and forwards by the wind, that he should lightly assert a thing, and afterwards retract it on account of what men say. John is like an oak, which stands unmoved in faith and stedfastness against every blast, whether of those who praise or those who blame. What he before testified of Me, when he was at liberty, he testifies with equal fortitude now that he has been shut up by Herod in prison: and he has sent his disciples to Me that they themselves may see by My miracles that his testimony concerning Me was true."

*Tropologically, a reed*, is a light man, inconstant, tossed to and fro: at one time impelled by the words of flatterers, he asserts something: again being driven by detractors, he denies it, as a reed is blown in different directions by different winds. 2. A reed is one who is devoid of truth, virtue, and consistency, as a reed has no strength, or *stamina*. 3. A reed is he who has no fruit of good works to show, since a reed bears no fruit. 4. It is he who is delighted with, and feeds upon, the fluctuating pleasures of the world. For a reed is dry: yet it grows beside the waters. Whence it is called, "the river reed."

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On this S. Austin writes piously and elegantly on the words of Ps. cxxxvii. 1. "Above the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept, when we remembered Sion." (Vulg.) "The rivers of Babylon," he says, "are all things which here are loved, and pass away. Sit above the rivers; sit not in the stream, nor under the stream. Behold in Babylon there are fair things to detain thee: let them not detain thee, let them not deceive thee."

Hear S. Greg. (*Hom.* vi. in *Evang.*) "What else but the carnal mind is signified by the reed? But such was not John, for favour could not flatter him, nor could the anger of any detraction make him harsh.

Hear also S. Ambrose (*lib.* 5 in c. 7 *Luc.* v. 24): "The Lord denies that we must go forth into the desert—that is, into the world—lest we should think those are to be imitated by us who are of a carnal mind, whom, being obnoxious to the storms of this world, an unsettled life disquiets; who are rightly compared to a reed, in whom is no solid fruit of justice, men with their long hair, with forensic trappings, implicated in knotty points, sonorous with empty mouthings, with no benefit to themselves, but often with harm, follow after things inwardly worthless, outwardly specious. We are reeds when we are not rooted with any natural strength. If any light gale of prosperity blow upon us, we beat our neighbours with idle motion: we are useless to help, facile to injure. Reeds love rivers, as the fading and transitory things of the world delight us. If, however, anyone shall pluck up this reed from the earth, and strip off its useless parts—spoiling the old man with his deeds—and guide it by the hand of a scribe writing quickly, it begins to be no more a reed, but a pen, which impresses the precepts of the heavenly Scriptures on the hidden places of the mind, and writes them on the tables of the heart."

Afterwards S. Ambrose adds, that Christ is the good reed of whom Isaiah prophesied (c. xlii.)—"A shaken reed he will not break" (Vulg.)—because the flesh which sins had shaken He made firm by the power of the Resurrection. The good reed is the Flesh of Christ, which nailed the serpent's head, and the enticements of worldly cupidity, to the gibbet of the Cross.

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*But what went ye out*, &c. But John is not soft and delicate. He is not clothed in palatial garments, but in sackcloth of camels' hair. For pleasures are the mistresses of flattery and lies, but hardness is the teacher of truth and sanctity.

*But what went ye out for to see? More than a prophet.* Syriac, *one more excellent than a prophet.* You may object that John himself denied that he was a prophet (Jo. i. 21). I reply, He said that out of humility, but in a true sense. For a prophet is, strictly speaking, one who foretells future events. But John did not foretell of Christ as about to come, but pointed to Him as present. He was therefore, rather the finger-post, as it were, than the prophet of Christ, and therefore Christ said that he was more than a prophet. In the next place, he, through the Divine Spirit, illustrated Christ, and knew the economy of Christ in the Flesh more clearly, fully, and perfectly than any of the prophets. 3. John was the angel, that is, the ambassador and precursor of Christ Himself, and immediately sent by Him, and that in His presence and before His face, according to the words of Malachi: "Behold I send My angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee." (Vulg.) 4. He himself was altogether greater than all the prophets, as Christ asserts, verse 11.

*For this is he of whom*, &c. Christ cites the words of Malachi iii. 1. See what I have there said. I have there collected the reasons and analogies why John is called an angel. And many indeed thought that he was not really a man, but an angel, as Eusebius shews (*lib.* 1, *De monst.* c. 5). Whence *Auctor Imperfecti* on this place says, "Marvellous was he who surpassed in human nature the sanctity of angels, and by the grace of God obtained what by nature he had not."

*Verily I say unto you*, &c. Luke adds the word *prophet* (vii. 27): *There hath not arisen a greater prophet.* Whence Toletus from SS. Ambrose and Hilary observes that Jesus does not use the word *greater* of John absolutely, but as restricted by the word *prophet.* For the Apostles were greater, or certainly in every way the equals of John. But, on the contrary, I should say that by the expression *Prophet*, Christ leaves it to be understood that there had been no

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person who was greater than John, for the prophets were accounted in the olden time, and really were, the most holy of men. So that as none of the prophets were greater than John, it may be gathered that there was no one else who was greater.

Christ therefore tacitly here calls John the greatest of all men, for otherwise He would not conclude from thence that he was *more than a prophet*, which He proceeds to prove. This must be understood of the worthies of the Old Testament—that is to say, of all time prior to Christ. John, therefore, is not here compared with Christ Himself, or the Blessed Virgin, or the Apostles, who followed Christ and who (by reason of their Apostolic dignity) were not less than John, but rather indeed greater than he. You may say that Moses was greater than John, because it was said of him (Deut. xxxiv. 11), "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses." I reply, that it goes on, "Whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt." Which means, that there was no prophet like unto Moses in his familiar converse with God, and the power by which he smote Egypt with plagues. But in other things John was equal with, yea greater than, Moses and the rest of the prophets.

Besides other distinguishing characteristics and prerogatives of John, his spirit, prophetic office, life, and actions were more sublime than those of the other prophets, as S. Jerome asserts, and S. Austin (*lib.* 2, *contr. advers. leg. et proph. c.* 5). For John was, as it were, a standing miracle in his conception, in the womb, in his birth, in his angelic life. He was conceived, by a miracle, of barren parents; by a miracle he recognized Christ in the womb; and saluted and adored him; by a miracle, when he was born he communicated universal gladness; by a miracle, at his circumcision he restored the use of speech to his dumb father; by a miracle, he went when a boy into the desert, and there lived like an angel all his life. Whence the Church sings of John—

> O boundlessly happy, of merit most lofty,
> Of purity snow-white, pollution thou hatest:
> O martyr most valiant, of deserts the lover,
> Of seers the greatest.

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And so John has the crowns of virginity, prophecy, and martyrdom, in addition to the crown of a doctor.

*But he that is least*, &c. 1. The least of the blessed in heaven is greater, that is, more blessed and more perfect, more excellent and glorious than John, who was still a mortal traveller. Christ adds these words that He may stir up His hearers to follow after the blessedness of His salvation by means of the evangelic law which He himself brought in. For this is the Kingdom of Heaven from which Christ began and continued His preaching.

2. With greater propriety and force, you may say with S. Chrysostom and others, that Christ here opposes, and in one sense places Himself lower than John, but in other respects prefers Himself to John. He says, "I have declared that among those born of women there is not a greater in the Old Testament than John; but lest ye should think that he is the greatest of all, and the Messias, I add, that Christ, who is younger than John, is, nevertheless, greater than he." It is as though Christ said, "I, Christ, who in age, and in the opinion of the common people, am less than John in preaching, in the kingdom of Heaven am greater than he, because I so preach that I at the same time inspire grace, by which believers in Me may indeed attain this kingdom." Whence it seems that a comma should be placed after the word *least*, not after *kingdom of heaven*. In the Gr. Christ is here called ὁ μικρότερος, *i.e., less than, junior to* John. The Heb. would be *haccaton*, or *the little one*, that is to say, *the least*, *the lowliest*, as Christ was when He said, "As for me, I am a worm and no man, the very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people." The comparative is often put for the superlative.

3. Our Maldonatus explains thus: *The less*, that is, the least Christian in the kingdom of Heaven, or the Church, which preaches and leads to the kingdom of Heaven is greater, that is, of higher dignity than John. Greater, I say, by reason of the status of the Church; and he is able to be greater from the nature of the Gospel, than John was. For the new law of Christ is the law of grace, which we are always able to increase. Whence John the Baptist and all the old fathers received their grace from Christ and the new law.

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*Symbolically*, S. Cæsarius says (*dialog.* 3), "The least, or the youngest of the Apostles was John the Evangelist, who is greater than John the Baptist, because the Apostle leant upon the bosom of Christ."

*From the days of John the Baptist*, &c. This pertains to the praise of John, and shews that he was more than a prophet, because he first began to preach the kingdom of heaven. And so efficacious was his preaching joined to his holy life, that many who were baptised by him repented, and changed their course of life, and with great zeal strove for the kingdom of heaven. And now, I succeeding to John, promote this zeal by Myself and My Apostles, yea and will more and more promote it.

Wherefore *the kingdom of heaven* now (βιάζεται, *i.e.*) *suffers force, is invaded, is seized by force.* 1. Because men in vast multitudes, being stirred up by the preaching of John run to obtain it with zeal, with avidity, one pushing before another, as though it were some rare merchandise.

2. Because the kingdom is now compassed by all, not by natural instinct, as the Jews would maintain, but by the supernatural power of grace. The kingdom is, as it were, invaded, in such sort that sinners, publicans, harlots, Gentiles, by the fervour of their repentance, take it beforehand, as it were, seize it by force, away from the Pharisees and Jews, who thought that it belonged to them alone as the children of Abraham. It is as though He said, the Pharisees and Christians contend for the kingdom of Heaven, but the Christians seize it from the Pharisees by force. Whence SS. Hilary and Amb. say, "Christ is seized, since He, born among one sort of people, is chosen by others." Amb. adds, "The Church has taken away the kingdom from the synagogue. Christ is my kingdom. The kingdom of Heaven is taken by force when Christ is denied by those of His own household, and is worshipped by the Gentiles. He is taken by force when he is rejected by the former, but cherished by the latter."

3. Because for the kingdom of Heaven's sake worldly men do violence to themselves by the cultivation of repentance, poverty, continence, mortification.

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In the Lives of the Fathers there is related the vision of a certain anchorite who beheld that a disciple of his merited seven crowns in Heaven in a single night, because he had seven times bravely withstood evil thoughts. By this he perceived that as often as any one struggles against sinful thoughts and desires he merits a crown from God. For it is written, *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

Beautifully does S. Ambrose comment on this passage, "We do violence to the Lord, not by compelling Him, but by weeping before Him, not by provoking by injuries, but by entreating with tears; not by blaspheming through pride, but by sorrowing through humility. O blessed violence which is not chastised with indignation, but is condoned in mercy—blessed violence, I say, which draws forth the goodness of Him who suffers the violence, and contributes to the profit of him who uses violence. An evil thing is done, and no one is blamed: violence is suffered, and religion is advanced. Whosoever shall do most violence to Christ shall be accounted most religious by Christ. We come upon the Lord in the way, for indeed He is the way, and after the manner of robbers, we endeavour to spoil Him of what is His. We desire to take His kingdom, His riches and His life. And He is so rich and so liberal that he does not resist. He does not deny, and after He has given all, He still possesses all." Afterwards he speaks of the manner and the weapons of this violence, saying, "We attack him, not with swords, nor staves, nor stones, but with meekness, good works, chastity. These are the weapons of our faith, by which we strive in our contest. But in order that we may be able to make use of these arms in doing violence, let us first use a certain violence to our own bodies, let us carry by storm the vices of our members, that we may obtain the rewards of valour. For to seize the Saviour's kingdom we must first reign in ourselves."

*And the violent*, &c. Those who invade the kingdom of Heaven in the sense in which I have just spoken. He alludes to an opulent city set upon a mountain, which must be stormed by great force, which is in fact stormed by soldiers who covet its riches. He alludes especially to the kingdom of Canaan, or the Promised Land, which

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the Hebrews under Joshua conquered by force of arms. This was a type of the kingdom of Heaven. In like manner Heaven is to be won by the sons of earth climbing up on high by their heavenly conversation. The empyrean sky is so lofty, so far above the earth, that were any one to live for 8000 years, and were every day to climb in perpendicular height a hundred thousand miles, yet would he not reach the top, as I have shewn on Gen. ii. 16. And because this is impossible to mortals, God has granted that what we cannot climb with corporeal feet we should reach by the affections of our minds.

In the life of S. Perpetua and her fellow-martyrs, we read that she was forewarned of her martyrdon in a dream. She beheld a golden ladder reaching from earth to heaven, which was hedged in and surrounded on all sides by knives and sharp swords. By this ladder they had to climb up to heaven. At its foot lay a horrible dragon who sought to hinder the climbers. She saw moreover one of her companions, Satyrus by name, bravely mounting the ladder, and inviting his companions to follow him. When she had related her vision they all understood that they were to suffer martyrdom. And so indeed it befell. Thus let each believer consider that with his utmost energy he must struggle up to Heaven by means of a ladder hedged about with knives.

*For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied*, &c. This sentence is expressed more clearly in Luc. xvi. 16—*The Law and the Prophets* (*i.e.*, prophesied), *until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached and every one uses violence to it.* (Vulg.) The Law of Moses and all the Prophets prophesied up to the time of John: *i.e.*, darkly and by enigmas they foretold and promised Christ and His heavenly kingdom, by promising terrestial good things, such as abundance of corn and wine and oil, and a rich and peaceful earthly kingdom like that of Solomon, which was a figure and a type of the celestial kingdom to be brought in by Christ. But John was the first who clearly and openly began to preach this heavenly kingdom of Christ, and to point out Christ as it were with his finger to the Jews.

Again the Old Testament which consists of the Law, or Pentateuch, and the Prophets, under which are the Hagiographical books, such as

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the Psalms, prophesied until John, that is, they taught the ignorant Jews not so much to love as to fear God, by the hope of temporal rewards, and to worship Him by means of sacrifices, and external rites and ceremonies, which were shadows and types of Christ. But John began to preach the new doctrines of repentance and the love of God, through hope in the kingdom of Heaven, and of obtaining celestial good things by means of internal acts of contrition, piety, and the worship of God, by which we are truly and perfectly justified through Christ.

Christ here compares and parallels prophecy with prophecy, *i.e.*, the doctrine of John's prophecy with the doctrine of the Law and the Prophets. For John was a mean between the Old and New Testaments, as it were the horizon of both, dividing and determining the New from the Old, as Salmeron says. He was the morning star of the Gospel who put an end to the shadows and the obscure night of the old Law, and ushered in the clear day of the new Law.

*And if ye will receive it, this is Elias*, &c. That is if ye wish to receive John, and to believe him, as ye ought to do. Whence the Syriac translates by the imperative—*If ye wish, receive ye.* For he shall be Elias unto you, because he being endowed with the spirit and power of Elias, shall convert you to God and Christ, in the same way that Elias shall convert your children and descendants at the end of the world by a like zeal and purity of life to the same Christ. Thus S. Jerome says, "John is Elias which is for to come, not because the same soul was in both, as the heretics think, but because they had the same grace of the Holy Spirit. John was girded as Elias was. Like Elias he lived in the desert. He suffered from Herodias as Elias did from Jezebel. And as Elias shall be the precursor of the Second Advent, so was John of the Lord when He came in the flesh to save us."

There is a reference to Mal. iv. 5, "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet." The Jews even to this day are eagerly expecting Elias from this prophecy of Malachi, that he may shew Christ unto them, and explain all the doubtful matters of the Law; and therefore they hold him in great account. This was why Christ compared and equalled John to him.

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*He that hath ears to hear.* Gr. *of hearing, i.e.*, to understand and obey. The Arabic has, *hearing ears.* For the Heb., which has a deficiency of compound words, uses simple in the place of compound words, as *hear* instead of *obey.* The meaning is, He that hath a teachable and obedient mind, let him hear, understand and obey the things which I say, namely, let him believe John to be a prophet and more than a prophet, when he declares that I am the Messiah, and henceforth let him receive and worship Me as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. There is special reference to Christ's declaration that John is Elias. For this is mystical, and requires intelligence, as S. Jerome says. Christ was wont by this phrase to rouse the attention of His hearers to important subjects.

*To what shall I liken,* &c. *This generation* means the Scribes and Pharisees, who despised the counsel of God and the preaching and baptism of John.

*They are like unto boys,* &c. There was in that age, says Theophylact on the seventh chapter of S. Luke, and S. Cyril, a game of this description. Boys divided themselves into two parties, and made as it were two choirs. Thus they represented human life on a sort of stage. One party, like Heraclitus, were always lamenting; the other side were always, like Democritus, laughing at it. By the one set all that we do was made the food for lamentation, by the other for jokes. They of the one choir kept wailing, those opposite to them played on pipes; but the choir which was wailing took no notice of the opposite choir, which was singing, neither, on the other hand, did the pipe-players take any notice of the mourners. And the lookers on heard like spectators at a comedy, but were neither moved by the wailing nor the dancing.

The meaning of the parable is plain from what follows. It is this: as though Christ said, "You may perceive in this generation of the Scribes and Pharisees something similar to the boyish games, as concerns the spectators who look on at their ease. For they cannot be induced to change their life and be converted, either by the example of the austere life of John, or by the less stern life of Christ." He likens the parable, as a whole, to the whole thing

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signified by it, and not a part to a part. Elegantly and wisely says S. Ambrose (*lib. 2, de Penitentia*)—Not that dancing which is the companion of pleasures and luxuries is here spoken of, but that whereby a man lifts himself on high, nor suffers the members to drag lazily along the ground. Thus S. Paul danced spiritually, when for our sakes he stretched himself out, and forgetting the things which were behind, and reaching forth unto those which were before, he strove for the prize of Christ. Thou likewise, when thou comest to baptism, be admonished to lift up thine hands, and to have feet that are swift to mount to things eternal. Dancing like this is the associate of faith, the companion of grace. This, then, is the mystery. We have sung unto you, as it were, the song of the New Testament, and ye have not danced—that is, ye have not lifted up your minds unto heavenly grace. We have lamented, and ye have not wept, *i.e.*, ye have not repented. There is an allusion to Ezek. xxxiii. 32: "Thou art unto them as a song of music which is very sweetly sung. And they hear thy words, but they will not do them."

*Allegorically*, S. Ambrose (*lib.* 4, *Epist.* 30), "The Son of God hath said, 'We have sung unto you, and ye have not danced,' &c. The Jews who did not dance were forsaken. They knew not how to clap their hands. The Gentiles were called, who gave spiritual praise to God. Here is the glorious dancing of the wise, the dance which David danced. Therefore, in the sublimity of his spiritual dancing, he ascended to the throne of Christ, that he might hear and see the Lord saying to his Lord, 'Sit thou at My right hand.'"

*For John came neither eating*, &c. That is to say, not eating, or living in pleasure, like other men, but living austerely, fasting, and feeding on locusts; that by this means he might arouse the Scribes to compunction, and affright them. Yet the Scribes say of him, *He hath a devil.* The Arabic has, *devils are with him.* That is, John was possessed by a devil, by whose power and energy he was sustained, so as to be able to lead so rigorous a life. Thus, the very austerity of John, which for their sakes he had lived, since from his purity and innocence it was not needed for his own sake, they attri-

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buted to a demon. Such was their extraordinary ingratitude and wickedness.

Observe then, how Christ applies this parable. John's austere life is signified by the troop of boys lamenting. But Christ living less austerely, and conversing with the world more familiarly, is denoted by the chorus of boys who piped. The Scribes and Pharisees laughed at, derided both of them, because they wished to be free from any reprover of their pleasures and licentious mode of life.

*The Son of Man came eating*, &c. (at a common table, living after the manner of ordinary men, and conversing familiarly with them), *And they say* (*i.e.*, the Scribes and Pharisees in their obstinate wickedness), *Behold a gluttonous man*, &c.

John led an austere life in the desert, Christ led the ordinary life of men, that His affability might allure those whom John's austerity would terrify. For Christ came into this world in order that he might afford to all men a perfect example of humility and every other virtue, an example which every one might imitate in their several ranks and stations. But especially did He come that sinners might be converted from their sins to God. Wherefore it was necessary that He should converse with them, eat and drink with them, and thus draw them to love and follow Him. So S. Thomas. S. Aug. gives another reason (*Lib.* 3, *de Doctr. Christ.* c. 12). It was, that Christ might show in all such things, namely, food, drink, clothing, &c., that it is not the things themselves, but the inordinate love of using them, which is in fault. And so He taught that rich men may live religiously in their riches, and be saved.

*But wisdom is justified of her sons.* Syr. *of her servants.* To *justify* is used in two senses, viz., *to make just* and *to declare just.* The wisdom of God is *justified*, *i.e.*, is pronounced and declared just, unblameable, fully and entirely perfect, as she manifested herself in John and Christ, because she left nothing untried that would conduce to the salvation of men. That they might have a pattern of an austere life and penance, she gave them John. Again, lest many should be terrified by this austerity, and despair of virtue and salvation, she gave them in Christ an example of ordinary life and virtue.

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*Of her children*, namely, those who were desirous of virtue and wisdom, such as those who believed in Christ, and who heard and obeyed John. Therefore, the wisdom of God, which the proud Scribes and the foolish Jews despised in John and Christ, was justified, *i.e.*, honoured and praised by all the truly wise. If, therefore, any perish, they perish by their own fault, because they will not believe and obey John and Christ. Thus they may impute their ruin to themselves, and justify God, according to the words of Ps. li. "That Thou mayst be justified in Thy sayings, and overcome when Thou art judged. In a similar sense, the Apostle says to Timothy (1. Tim. iii.), "Great is the sacrament of piety, which was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit" (Vulg.), *i.e.*, was declared and shown to the world to be just, holy and wise, and that the work and mystery of the incarnation of the WORD was worthy of God. That this is the meaning is plain from Luke vii. 29, who thus relates the occasion of this parable, and by means of the preamble, as it were, sets forth the scope and intention of the parable. "And all the people and the publicans who heard him, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers despised the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized of him." And presently He subjoins the parable of the boys piping and lamenting, as I have already expounded it.

S. Aug. (*lib. 2 de doctr. Christ.*) expounds the passage as follows: *Wisdom is justified of her own sons*, because "the holy Apostles perceived that the kingdom of God did not consist in meat and drink, but in the equanimity of endurance, forasmuch as they were such as neither abundance lifted up, nor want depressed."

Lastly, S. Jerome in this passage, and S. Ambrose, remark that various Gr. *codices* read *Wisdom is justified by her works.* Because, says S. Jerome, "wisdom seeks not the testimony of the mouth, but of deeds."

*Then began He to upbraid*, &c. *Then* namely, when He sent the Apostles to preach throughout Galilee, and He preached by Himself, though with little fruit and few conversions. *He began to upbraid* the extreme ingratitude and obstinate wickedness of these cities, viz.,



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those in which most of His mighty works, *i.e.*, His miracles, were done. These were the miracles by which He confirmed His teaching. And He upbraided the cities because after so many miracles, and so many exhortations, so many threats of hell, so many promises of the Kingdom of Heaven, they had not repented.

*Woe unto thee, Chorazin*, &c. Chorazin was a renowned city of Galilee, which was numbered amongst the ten more celebrated towns of Decapolis. It was situated over against Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee, where the Jordan flows into it. It was about two miles distant from Capernaum. Wherefore Christ, who had fixed his home and settled abode at Capernaum, frequently made excursions to preach in Chorazin and Bethsaida, and the neighbouring towns. Chorazin, or Cozorain in Chaldee, is the same as *Co*, i.e., *here*, and *raya*, i.e., a *secret*. Appropriately, because Christ here preached the *arcana*, or secrets of the faith. S. Jerome, in his work on Hebrew places, testifies that in his time Corozain, as it is spelt in the Vulgate, was deserted. There are still some ancient ruins remaining on its site. Some persons are of opinion that Antichrist will be born at Chorazin, and brought up there, though others think he will be born in Babylon, according to the words of Jeremiah (cap. I.), "From Babylon shall all evil be opened out." But both these opinions are extremely doubtful.

*Bethsaida:* Bethsaida also was one of the chief cities of Galilee, adjacent to the sea, and distant from Capernaum about three hours' journey. It received its name from being inhabited by fishermen. *Beth* means a *house*, and *saida* is fishing, צוד *sud* in Heb. means to *hunt*, but in Syriac to *fish*, because fishing is hunting in the sea, whence *saida* means *fishermen*. So Franc. Lucas. It is probable that the home of Peter and Andrew was in this city, where Christ healed Peter's mother in law, who was sick of a fever. But see what I have said on viii. 14. Here, also, Christ placed spittle in the eyes of a certain blind man, and restored him to perfect sight (see Mark, c. viii.) Wherefore, Christ deservedly upbraids Bethsaida, because, though its people had seen so many miracles of His, they did not believe in Him. And so he threatens it with destruction, future as well as present; and this really happened to them. For this city formerly so

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abounding in prosperity, and so populous, is so deserted that it scarcely contains six houses. (See Adrichomius, *Descrip. Terræ Sanct.* p. 137.)

*For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre*, &c. We must understand, if the inward grace of God had accompanied the outward miracles: that is to say, if there had been an illumination of the understanding, and an influencing of the will, agreeable and proportionable to those, such as God is wont ordinarily to give. For without inward grace to influence the mind, all outward preaching is vain and worthless.

*They would long ago have repented*, &c. Theologians gather from this passage that God knows certainly conditional events, which depend on free will, even although those events will never happen, forasmuch as the condition does not exist in the nature of things. Christ here asserts positively that the Tyrians and Sidonians would have repented if they had seen the miracles of Christ, yet they did not see these miracles, and consequently did not repent. The reason *à priori* is, the infinite nature of the Divine Mind, the immeasurable scope and activity of the Divine understanding, which wholly comprehends, penetrates and perfectly beholds all things, even those that are the most secret, and what is called the liberty of man, and his free thoughts and volitions. Therefore it is omniscient, and nothing is able to escape it, so that it should not thoroughly behold and perceive it. For the object of the Divine omniscience is all truth, past, present, and future, and that either conditional or absolute. In future conditional events, one half of a contradiction is true, as in absolute propositions. For with the condition, that which is said will either be, or will not be. See what I have said on Jer. xxxviii. 17., also on Wisdom iv. 11. on the words, "He was taken away, lest wickedness should change his understanding."

Again, S. Aug. (*lib. de bono perseveran. caps.* 9 and 10), refutes by means of this passage the Semipelagians who said that God predestinates such and such men, because He foresees they will use well grace, if it be given them. For the Tyrians would have used grace well, if it had been given, yet it was not given.

Lastly, from this place do not gather that to the Tyrians was



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wanting sufficient grace, but such copious and abundant grace as the Galilæans had.

*Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable:* Arabic, *there shall be greater remission for Tyre*, &c. For the Tyrians and Sidonians shall be punished on account of their own wickednesses, but you, O ye Galilæans shall be more severely punished: 1. Because ye had greater knowledge of God's law, and virtue. 2. Because ye have often heard Me preaching and exhorting to repentance, and have beheld Me doing many miracles, none of which things the Tyrians have either seen or heard.

*Moraliter:* In like manner, Christians shall be more heavily punished in the day of judgment than the Jews; the citizens of Rome, than the inhabitants of India; priests, than laymen; religious, than seculars, if the former classes have lived sinful lives; forasmuch as they have received greater degrees of grace and knowledge from God, and would not make use of them, but abused them to their own greater damnation.

*And thou, Capernaum*, &c. Thou, which art exalted through My miracles and doctrine and preaching, rather than by thy merchandise and thy wealth, and who hast been made glorious and famous with God and man, shalt thou, I say, be always exalted? Not so: but in the day of judgment thou shalt be thrust down to hell: Thou shalt descend into its lowest pit; that beneath the Tyrians and Sidonians who have sinned less than thou hast, thou mayst abide in the very centre of Gehenna, and there mayest feel more than others its fiery burnings. Thou shalt be tormented and burnt up, because very many of thy citizens shall be cast into hell. Hence S. Aug. (*Serm.* 42 *de Sanc.*) explains *exalted*, as follows: "Forasmuch as thou seemest to thyself to be very happy, very powerful, very proud, and so dost despise Me, and all who admonish thee, this is the very cause why thou rushest on thine own destruction."

*For if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would perchance*, as the Vulg. here hath it: (*forte*) &c. But this word *forte, peradventure*, or *perchance*, does not in this place denote doubt, or hesitation. It represents the ἂν of

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the Gr. text. ἄν is here an expletive, or a particle expressing confirmation, and signifies, *certainly, verily.* The translation omits to render ἄν in v. 21., and various other passages, where it is found in the Greek. Indeed ἄν is only translated *forte, perhaps,* in four places, viz., here; in John v. 46; in Ps. lxxxi. 15; and in 2 Cor. vii. 5. In all the other passages, which are very numerous, in which ἄν occurs in the Greek, it is not translated in the Vulgate, but the passage is rendered affirmatively, as in Matt. iii. 18, v. 18, vi. 5, x. 12, and very many other places, as you may perceive from a Greek Concordance. This is the reason why Vatablus and others omit the *perchance* in this passage, and trans. simply, *it would have remained.* The *perchance* does not mean that Christ had any doubt about Sodom's remaining but that although it certainly would have remained, yet this remaining would have been free, *i.e.* of its own free will, therefore the word ἄν denotes that he foresaw what would have happened, as it were fortuitously. Thus Terence says in the *Andria,* "Perchance I behold a soldier: I approach the man." Also Livy (*lib.* 1.), "Perchance it fell out." The meaning therefore is, If the Sodomites had heard My preaching, and had beheld as many miracles, as you have, O ye inhabitants of Capernaum, in confirmation of that preaching, verily they would have felt compunction and would have repented, and would have remained until this very day. Understand; unless they themselves or their descendants had after their repentance again relapsed into the same, or similar sins, and had again provoked the anger of God to bring upon them a like destruction. But if they had continued in their repentance and change of life, they would have remained until this day. All this is intimated by the word, *perchance,* here. And this is why Franc. Lucas renders ἂν ἔμειναν by the potential mood, *they might have remained.*

*Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable:* Arabic, *it shall find greater forgiveness:* Syriac, *they shall be more tranquil.*

*At that time Jesus answered and said,* &c. What Christ now says, agrees well with what has gone before, for Christ here gives the reason why the Capernaites, the Scribes, the priests, and the Pharisees, despised Him, and His preaching, because, in truth, they

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were proud, and seemed, in their own eyes, wise and prudent. Wherefore they would not bend their proud necks to the humility of Christ and the Gospel, but the Apostles and the disciples and the multitude did bow their necks. This sentence also expresses that Christ soothed the grief which He felt because of their proud incredulity by a consideration of, and complacency in, the just judgment and the Divine decree, whereby God hid these things from the proud as unworthy of them, and revealed them to little ones, *i.e.*, to the lowly. Whence Luke adds. *He exulted in the Holy Spirit* (Vulg.) *i.e.*, He rejoiced through the Holy Ghost, which had suggested to Him this consideration, and the joy which arose out of it. Therefore he praised and thanked God. We too can do as Christ did, that when we lose our labour with the proud and the unworthy, we may quell our grief by considering the Divine Will and Providence, which despises the proud, and chooses the humble, and lifts them to His grace and glory.

*I confess* (Vulg). That is, *I praise* and *give thanks.* This is the meaning of the Heb. ידא, *yada*, in *Hiphil*, viz., הודה, *hoda*, from which comes תודה, *a sacrifice*, viz., *of confession*, *i.e.*, of praise, and giving thanks. Thus, too, we constantly find in the Psalms such expressions as, "I will confess to Thee with my whole heart," *i.e.*, I will praise Thee; and, "Confess to the Lord, for He is good," *i.e.*, praise the Lord.

*To Thee, O Father*, who lovest Me with a peculiar love, and who disposest all things to Thy and My glory. He adds this lest any one should attribute it to want of power in Christ that He did not subdue to Him the proud Capernaites and Pharisees. It is as though He had said, "Thou, O my Father, forasmuch as Thou art Lord of Heaven and earth, hast the hearts of all men in Thy hands, and couldst bend them by a single nod, and subdue them before Me, but this, by Thine holy ordinance, Thou wouldst not do."

Moreover, under the name of Heaven and earth, all creatures—all men and angels are signified. By which it is intimated—1. That God has care for and rules, and calls to the grace of the Gospel and salvation by Christ, not the Jews only, but the Gentiles also. 2. That

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God is drawing His faithful ones from earth to Heaven, inasmuch as He is Lord of Heaven equally with earth, and therefore opens heaven to His friends. 3. That in like manner as God has separated the lowly Apostles from the proud Pharisees on earth, so in like manner has He separated the humble angels from proud Lucifer and his adherents in heaven.

Listen to Tertullian (*lib.* 1, *contra, Marc. c.* 13): "There is the fulness of the Deity itself setting forth perfect God, Father and Lord, Father by clemency, Lord by discipline, Father by sweet power, Lord by severity: a Father to be affectionately loved, a Lord to be necessarily feared: to be loved because He prefers mercy before sacrifice; to be feared because He will not tolerate sin: to be loved because He prefers the repentance to the death of a sinner; to be feared because He will not accept sinners who do not repent. Therefore, the Law prescribes both: thou shalt love God, and thou shalt fear God. He proposes the one to him who follows Him, the other to him who goes astray from Him."

*And hast revealed them unto babes,* Gr.[1] νηπίοις, or *infants.* So the *Arabic,* meaning to ignorant, unskilled, and uneloquent men (such as the Apostles, who seemed to the Scribes and worldly persons to be rude, and as foolish as children), in order that Thou mayest exhibit in them the power of Thy grace and Thy light, by which Thou hast made the tongues of these infants eloquent, so that their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. There is an allusion to Ps. viii. 3: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise, that Thou mightest destroy the enemy and the avenger." For the election and disposition of God are clean contrary to the world. For the world courts and chooses the rich, the wise, the proud. God chooses the poor, the ignorant, the weak; and He makes them rich, wise, and powerful in spirit above all the worldly.

From this passage, S. Augustine (*de prædest. Sanct. c.* 6, *et de Bono Perseveran. c.* 8), and S. Gregory (25 *Moral. c.* 13) teach, that when some believe the preached Gospel and others believe not, it is the effect of the grace and justice of God. For they who believe are so

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congruously illuminated in their minds by the grace of God, that they do believe; but they who believe not, on account of their pride and other sins, are not so congruously illuminated by God, that they do, in fact, believe; although if they would consent to, and co-operate with, the illumination which God affords them, they could believe, and in truth would believe.

*Even so Father*, &c. The Gr. is ναὶ ὁ Πατήρ, for the Greeks often use the nominative for the vocative. The meaning is, Truly, O Father, what Thou hast done, most rightly hast Thou done, in that it hath pleased Thee to humble the proud, and exalt the lowly. Christ teaches that the original cause of the predestination and election of the faithful, as well as the reprobation of unbelievers and the wicked is nothing else save God's good pleasure. Wherefore, we ought to rest in that, and not seek for other reasons, since that one thing is sufficient for the faithful, and worth a thousand reasons. Hence the Blessed in Heaven, when they see their children and parents condemned for their demerits, do not lament, but approve and laud the just judgment of God.

*All things are delivered unto Me*, &c. Christ said that the Almighty God was His Father, and that He—as Lord of Heaven and earth—rejected the proud Pharisees, but revealed Himself and His grace to His lowly Apostles: but now, lest any one should suppose that Christ was inferior to the Father, He teaches the converse, namely, that the Father giveth all He hath to the Son—yea, that through the Son alone He worketh, teacheth, and bestoweth His gifts.

Moreover, this expression, *all things have been delivered unto Me by the Father*, ought to be thus understood, that nevertheless, Christ ought to be considered to possess all things by nature. "For like as He is, according to His nature, *life*, He is said to be quickened by the Father; and although He is the Lord of Glory, He is said to have received glory," says the Council of Ephesus. The meaning therefore is, all things which the Father hath, viz., the divine nature, dominion and power, say SS. Hilary and Augustine, and consequently, what Christ here more particularly refers to, *all things*, *i.e.*, the dominion, power, and government of all things, but chiefly of men,

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have been granted unto Me by the Eternal Father, as to His Son by eternal generation, and in time the same things have been given to Me, as man, by the Hypostatic Union, that I may choose, illuminate, predestinate, save, whom I will, such as the Apostles; and reject, and condemn, whom I accept not, such as the proud Capernaites. For in My hand is the predestination, or reprobation, the salvation or damnation of all men; for as much as I have been appointed by God the Father the Saviour and Redeemer of the World, and in My hand the Father hath placed all things that I should repair and renew them. That as by Me as God He created all things, so also by Me in the flesh which I have assumed, He may re-create and restore all things. To this end I came, and for this I was made man. These mysteries therefore have been hidden from the wise, I mean My Mission, My Incarnation, the end of My advent, My work, but they have been already, in part, revealed to little ones, and shall hereafter be perfectly revealed.

*And no one knoweth the Son*, &c., Luke x. 22, has, *no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; nor who the Father is save the Son*, &c. He means, I have been sent by the Father to be the Teacher and Saviour of the World, that I should teach men the truth and the way to God the Father, who is uncreated health and felicity. For this felicity, since it is supernatural, cannot be naturally known by man or angel. Wherefore, as no one knoweth the Son except the Father, and he to whom the Father shall reveal Him, so likewise no one knoweth the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him. For as the Father communicates His nature, so likewise He communicates the knowledge of Himself and all things which He hath to the Son, and by Him to the rest of mankind. He, therefore, who desires to draw near to the truth, grace and salvation, which are in God the Father, must draw near through Me, and believe in Me. For I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. My doctrine is the doctrine of God the Father. By Me, therefore, ye shall have access to the Father.

Now although it is said, *except the Son*, the Holy Ghost is not excluded; much less, when it is said, *except the Father*, is the Son

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excluded. For the rule of Theologians is, that exclusive particles, added to one of the Divine Persons in essential attributes do not exclude the other two Persons, but creatures only, or whatsoever is of a different essence. Thus S. Aug. (*lib.* 6. *de Trin. c.* 9.) *S. Cyril, and the rest of the Fathers and Schoolmen.* Observe that Christ, in the first place, revealed the knowledge of the two first Persons, viz., the Father and the Son, and afterwards, just before His death, faith in the third Person, viz., the Holy Ghost, as is plain from John, xvi. 7.

S. Chrysostom wisely observes (*Hom.* 39.) that it is not said, to whom He has been commanded by the Father to reveal, but *to whom He will reveal*, in order that the Son may be shown to be equal to the Father in dominion and power. For, although Christ reveals as man, or by means of His human nature, yet this nature subsists in the Divine person, and therefore this man Christ is God, and equal to God the Father.

Moreover, SS. Chrysostom and Irenæus (*Lib.* 4. *c.* 14.) answer Marcion, who rejected the Old Testament and its God, and said, if God the Father was not known before the revelation of Christ Incarnate, therefore He was not known in the Old Law, therefore its author and God was not the true God. Thus they expound the words, *no one knoweth the Father except the Son* of the Divine knowledge by which the Son *qua* God, comprehends the Father, and the Father the Son. You may, however, better understand it concerning the knowledge communicated to the human nature of Christ: for this revealed His mysteries to the prophets and fathers, even the mysteries of the Divinity and the Trinity, Thus He revealed the same things after His Incarnation to the Apostles and faithful, *qua* man. For no one is a believer and a Christian except by Christ, and through Christ Incarnate. For, says St. Jerome, it is one thing to know what thou knowest by equality of nature, as the Son knoweth the Father; another, by the condescension of Him who reveals, as we know God by the revelation of Christ.

*Come unto Me all*, &c. Syriac, *who are weary and bear burdens.* Arabic, *who are worn with labour and heavily burdened.* After He has shown the Majesty and Deity, lest any one should be affrighted at it, Christ adds the Humanity, and most kindly invites all to Him.

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*Come*, not with the feet of the body, but with the affections of faith, hope, love, religion, devotion, and piety.

*All who labour*, none are excluded. For there is no one who does not labour under some disease, and need Christ's medicine. Therefore Christ offers Himself to all, that they may receive from Him health and safety. Thus did He kindly correct and heal Magdalen, Matthew, Paul, and Peter. Thus even now, in the Eucharist, He inviteth all and saith, Come unto me, ye infirm, hungry, afflicted ones I will refresh you.

*Who labour.* Gr. οἱ κοπιῶντες, *i.e., who suffer trouble and are burdened*, &c., who are fatigued and depressed, and are sinking under the burden, both of sins (as SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustin say), as well as of the law of Moses (as Theophylact), and also of the troubles and temptations of this life.

*And I will refresh you.* Gr. ἀναπαύσω, i.e., *I will give rest to the weary*, as the Syriac translates. I will place you in all quietness, says St. Chrysostom, by most soothing words, by Sacraments, as most efficacious medicines, by grace, and most sweet inward consolations; lastly by most felicitous glory in Heaven.

*Take*, Syr., *bear*, *My yoke.* He means, ye have borne a heavy and well nigh intolerable yoke, and the burden of the old law of sin and concupiscence. Come unto Me, I will take it away, and will change it into the sweet yoke of the evangelical law of grace and charity. I will refresh you by My yoke, which indeed is a yoke because it is a law binding the soul, but at the same time it is medicine, yea a bed, in which ye may sweetly rest, especially, by means of the humility which it teaches and commands. For it is the one and only medicine of all diseases, both of soul and body, and the alleviation and rest of all burthens. For nothing is harsh to the meek, nothing difficult to the lowly, says S. Leo. For as wool receives cannon balls and breaks their force by its softness, so meekness and humility break and soften all hard and rugged things. This yoke, therefore, is the gospel of Christ, and the law of grace. Whence S. Bernard (*Serm.* 15. *in Ps.* 91) says, "He invites those who labour to refreshment. He calls those who are laden to rest; and yet He does not take away either

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burden or labour, but He exchanges them for another burden, another labour, but a light burden, a sweet yoke, wherein rest or refreshment, even though it appear not, nevertheless is found."

*And learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, i.e.*, in the affection of the heart, viz., will, says S. Bernard (*Serm.* 49 *in Cant*). For many are lowly in word, few in heart. *And ye shall find*, &c. Listen to S. Augustine: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, not to frame a world, not to create all things, visible and invisible, not to do miracles in the world and to raise the dead; but that I am meek and lowly in heart. Dost thou wish to be great, begin from the least. Thou art thinking of constructing a mighty fabric of loftiness, think first of the foundation of humility. And as great as each one wishes to build up his edifice, the greater the building, so much the more deeply let him dig his foundation." Wisely says Climacus (*Gradu* 25): "Humility is a grace of the soul without a name, being named by those alone who have made trial of it, an inexhaustible treasure, having obtained a name from God, a singular gift of God. Learn, He says, not of an angel, not of a man, not out of a book, but from Me, that is, from My dwelling in you, and working in you, because I am meek and lowly in heart, and in thought, and in sense, and ye shall find rest from internal conflicts in your souls.

2. And better, *Auctor Imperf.* and Maldonat. *Learn of Me, i.e.*, do not fear to come to Me, and to take the yoke of My gospel on your neck, for if ye come and receive it, ye shall indeed learn that I am no tyrant, nor a severe and rigid King, but a lowly, meek, clement and benign Lord.

Moreover, Christ was of so great humility and meekness in bearing with the Scribes, His disciples, and the multitude, in bearing injuries, derision, the scourge, the cross and death, that even if He had wrought no miracle He would, by such meekness, have proved sufficiently, and more than sufficiently, that He was the Man from Heaven and the true Prophet sent from God. I verily admire more Christ s meekness, than His miracles and His raising the dead.

*Moraliter.* Learn from hence how great, and how dear to Christ is humility. It is as if He said, learn of Me not to create a world,

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not subtilely to dispute concerning God and the Holy Trinity, not to perform Herculean labours, but that I am meek and lowly in heart.

2d. Humility is the secret of peace. There is no rest for the mind, save in humility. Do you wish for rest? Embrace humility, a lowly place, a lowly office, humble food, clothing, &c. It is impossible for the proud to have peace of soul, because they always desire great things, and often are unable to attain them.

3d. Humility takes from man every labour and all burdens. Humility is the alleviator of every labour, and the renewer of strength: as a certain Doctor has well said, humility is a medicine against all diseases; and health of soul and body. Moreover, Hippocrates hath said, Creatures without gall are long lived, *i.e.*, animals which have no gall, such as stags, live long. The meek, therefore, and the humble, are healthy and long lived; for meekness brings into due order both the mental character and the humours of the body, which bile disorders, hence diseases.

4th. Humility is the virtue of Christ. *Learn of Me*, He says. This is mine own especial virtue, dear to Me above all others, which, by descending from Heaven to this lower world, and by stooping to the shameful death of the cross, I manifested in such a manner that none should be more illustrious and more wonderful in My life and in My death. Thus on the contrary, pride is the sin of Lucifer. Humility, therefore, makes us most like Christ. What more worthy? What more desirable?

Well says S. Augustine (*Epist.* 112). "They who have learnt of the Lord Jesus to be meek and lowly in heart make greater progress by praying and meditating, than by reading and hearing."

Finally, Christ here joins meekness with humility, because they are, as it were, twin sisters, or as mother and daughter. Whence S. Bernard (*Sermon* 2, on those words in the Apocalypse, *cap.* 12, *A great sign*) says, Like as naughtiness is the mother of presumption, so true meekness proceeds only from true humility.

Hear Climacus (*Gradu.* 24). The light of dawn goes before the sun, meekness precedes humility. Therefore, let us hear first Christ the Light, who disposes those things, as it were, by steps. Learn, He

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says, of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. After that, He thus defines meekness: Meekness is the immutable state of the mind which preserves an equable frame in good fortune and in disgrace. Meekness is sincerely and *ex animo* to pray for those who trouble you without being troubled yourself. Meekness is a jutting rock against the fury of the sea, which breaks all its waves, whilst itself remains unmoved and unbroken. Meekness is the prop of patience, the gate of charity, yea its very parent, the proof of prudence. For He will teach, saith the Lord, the meek His ways. It is the procurer of pardon, the confidence of sinners in prayer, the habitation of the Holy Spirit. "For upon whom shall I look, save upon the meek and quiet person?" (Psalm 66, Vulg.)

*For My yoke is sweet* (Vulg.). The yoke and burden of Christ is the gospel, say SS. Hilary, Bede, and others. The law of the gospel, therefore, is a yoke, because it binds us to discipline, lest any one should depart from justice. The Gr. for *sweet* is not γλυκὺς, i.e., *sweet like sugar*, but χρηστὸς, i.e., *beneficial, humane, kind* (Arab.), good in comparison with the old law. 1st. Because it has fewer and easier precepts; 2d. Because it gives greater grace, which much lightens the burden of the command; 3d. Because it rules us as sons, not by fear, as servants, like the ancient law; 4th. because it does not threaten, nor bring in death, like the old law, but takes it away; 5th. Because it promises to those who keep it the most felicitous life, and as it were, leads them by the hand to the sweetness of celestial joys, according to the words, "They shall be satisfied with the fulness of Thy house: Thou shalt give them drink of thy pleasures as out of a river." Psalm xxxvi. 9.

He says, therefore, *take My yoke upon you*, because in the yoke of Divine servitude, perfect consolation and refreshment are included. Whence S. Ambrose (*Lib. de Helia et jejun. cap.* 22): Receive, therefore, the yoke of Christ, do not fear because it is a yoke. Make haste, because it is light. It doth not bruise the neck, but dignifies it. Why do ye doubt? Why delay? It does not bind your neck with chains, but couples it with grace. It does not constrain of necessity, but directs the will to good works.

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*My*, because indeed I, Christ, lay it upon you, yea, indeed, I bear it with you, and put My neck under the burden, yea I bear and carry all the burden, and you yourself with it. For that is called a yoke, which two beasts joined together bear. Christ then places one portion only of the yoke, *i.e.*, the Evangelical Law, upon our neck; He himself bears the other and heavier part, and therefore He draws this yoke with us, and infuses strength and courage into us to draw it, both by His grace and by His example. So lately there was a certain priest in Japan of the Society of Jesus, who generously endured a dreadful death for Christ's sake, who was often wont to say: "Christ therefore makes the yoke putrescent before the face of the oil." Is. x. 27. (*Vulg.*)

We may apply what we read in the life of S. Mechtildes, who when she was tormented with fearful headaches and could find no rest, heard these words from Christ as He showed her the wound in His side, *enter now, and be at rest.* This straightway she did, and entered in with gladness. And it seemed to her that He had as many silken pillows as she had felt pangs of headache. And the Lord said, "Silk worms carry silk, and of Me it has been written, I am a worm and no man. Hitherto thou hast served Me devotedly in labours; from henceforth thou shall study to serve Me in pleasing exercises of virtues by My example; and the things which shall be insupportable to thee, I will carry with thee."

This yoke, therefore, of Christ is not so much a yoke as a silken pillow, because it does not press us with trouble, but releases us from the weight of earthly things, and raises us to Heaven.

Wherefore S. Bernard appositely compares this burden to the plumage of birds. Thus he writes to the monks (*Epist.* 341), "In the way of life the more swiftly, the more easily we run; and the larger the Saviour's light burden grows, the more portable it becomes. Does not the quantity of plumage a bird has lighten, rather than weigh it down? Take away its feathers, and what remains of it is borne down to the ground by its own weight."

Thus, likewise, is Christ's discipline, thus His sweet yoke, thus His light burden; if we lay it down, we are ourselves depressed,

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because He carries us rather than is carried by us. S. Ambrose adds (in Ps. cxix. Serm. 3), "To carry the yoke of Christ is sweet, if you consider it an ornament to your neck, not a burden. Lift up, therefore, thine eyes to the Lord thy God, seek God, and thou shalt find Him. Erect thy neck; thou carriest a necklace, not a chain. Many creatures delight in a necklace, and seem to themselves to be adorned rather than made naked; like as the cheeks of the turtle-dove will bear the marks of her modesty, the necklace of her neck will raise the presumption of her liberty. There is nothing more glorious than that yoke of Christ." Lastly, S. Bernard (Serm. 15 in Ps. *Qui habitat*) by yoke and burden understands the load of God's gifts and favours, because the burden of the law which is imposed is the gift of grace, the perfect observance of which brings all other gifts into the mind. "God burdens us when He unburdens us. He lades us with benefits when He unlades us of our sins. This is the voice of him who is burdened, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all the benefits that He hath done unto me?" The voice of him who is burdened, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Moreover, to the proud and carnal, the yoke of Christ and the law of humility, abstinence, continence, mortification, seems very heavy and intolerable, because they are devoid of the Spirit, and only love and think of the flesh and fleshly things. Truly says S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 14, *in* 1 *ad Cor.*), "Virtue is rugged if it be compared with our weakness; for that it is easy and light, hear Christ testifying, My yoke is sweet, and My burden is light. But if thou dost not understand, let not wonder seize thee, for thou art not of a brave mind: for as, when strength of mind is present heavy things become light, so when it is absent, light things become heavy. What, I ask, was sweeter than manna? What readier to their hand? Nevertheless the Jews murmured when they were feeding on delicacies. What more dreadful than the hunger and the other labours which Paul endured? Nevertheless he rejoiced and was glad, saying, Now I rejoice in mine infirmities. What, then, was the cause of these things? Diversity of mind, which, if thou wouldst make it such as it ought to be, thou wouldst discern the easiness of virtue."

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## CHAPTER XII.

1 *Christ reproveth the blindness of the Pharisees concerning the breach of the sabbath,* 3 *by scriptures,* 9 *by reason,* 13 *and by a miracle.* 22 *He healeth the man possessed that was blind and dumb.* 31 *Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven.* 36 *Account shall be made of idle words.* 38 *He rebuketh the unfaithful, who seek after a sign;* 49 *and sheweth who is his brother, sister, and mother.*

AT that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

2 But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

6 But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue:

10 ¶ And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out?

12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.



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13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

14 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

15 But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

16 And charged them that they should not make him known:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

22 ¶ Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

24 But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beezlebub the prince of the devils.

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?

27 And if I by Beezlebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges.

28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

29 Or else, how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

31 Wherefore I say unto to you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy* Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.

33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit.

34 O generation of vipers! how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned

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38 ¶ Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master we would see a sign from thee.

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

46 ¶ While he yet talked to the people, behold, *his* mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

48 But he answered and said unto them that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

*At that time Jesus went through the corn fields* (Through the crops of corn becoming white, or ripe), &c. Luke adds that this Sabbath was the first from the second (*Vulg.*); which I will explain in the proper place. Again there is here a Hysterologia; for these things appear to have happened after the Mission of the Apostles, and therefore before the Sermon on the Mount, as may be gathered from Mark ii. 22, and Luke vi. 1. That they rubbed the ears of corn in their hands, and satisfied their hunger is, says S. Jerome, a mark of their austere life.

*But when the Pharisees saw it*, &c. Luke vii. 2, has, *they said unto them, i.e.*, to the disciples of Christ, because they brought forward the objection first against the disciples, afterwards against Christ.



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Observe, they do not find fault with the disciples for plucking ears of corn, or grapes; for this was permitted by the law, Deut. xxiii. 25, but because they did it on the Sabbath. For to pluck ears seems a servile work, and therefore, a violation of the rest and sanctity of the Sabbath.

*Allegorically.* SS. Hilary, Ambrose, and Bede think that it is signified by this that the Apostles in the second Sabbath from the first, *i.e.*, in the time of the gospel would gather grains from the seed and crops of preaching, *i.e.*, the elect faithful, from among all nations, by whose faith and piety they should be fed, until they should lay them up with themselves in the heavenly barn. But the Pharisees seeing the Gentiles preferred to themselves in the Gospel envied them, and vainly murmured against the Apostles.

*Tropologically:* Bede says, "Those walk with the Lord, through the corn fields, who delight to meditate on the sacred oracles. They hunger, when they desire to find therein the bread of life; and that on the Sabbath, when they are glad to rest with a mind free from disturbing thoughts. They rub the ears, and purify them from the husks that they may reach the grain, when they take up the testimonies of Scripture, and dwell upon them until they find in them, as it were the marrow of love. But this refreshment of the mind is displeasing to fools, and is approved by the Lord."

*But He said unto them, Have ye not read—And they that were with Him?* This last seems to be at variance with 1 Sam. 21, where it is said, David was alone. I answer, David flying from Saul, went alone to Ahimelech, whom Mark calls Abiathar, the high priest; and asked, and received the loaves from him, which he brought to the companions of his flight, whom he had left, elsewhere, waiting for him, as is plain both from this passage, as well as from 1 Sam. 21, where David says to the priest, "I have appointed to the young men for such and such a place." So S. Jerome.

*How he entered,* &c. *The shew-bread.* The shew-bread were loaves always set forth in the Holy Place, before the Holy of Holies, which was, as it were, the throne of God, sitting upon the Mercy-seat; they were loaves, therefore, set forth before the face of God. Whence

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the LXX. has ἄρτους ἐνωπίους, *i.e.*, *panes faciales*, Syriac, *the bread of the Lord's table.* In Heb. they are called, לחמי פנים *lachme panim*, that is, *loaves of faces.* They were twelve, six on one side of the table and six on the other side, as there are two cheeks on a face. By these twelve loaves, the twelve tribes of Israel confessed that they were continually fed and nourished by God. Wherefore frankincense was put upon them (see Lev. xxiv.); for frankincense was the symbol that they were the Lord's, and were offered to Him. In return, God, from His satisfaction at the offering of these loaves made manifest that He always remembered the twelve tribes, and had them before His face continually. See what has been said on Exod. xxv. 30. God had commanded these sacred loaves to be renewed every Sabbath. New loaves were placed upon the table, and the old were taken away. They were eaten by the priests only, and that only in the Tabernacle, as is plain from Lev. xxiv. 8, 9. The force of the argument is this: David, a man after God's own heart, made use of the holy shew-bread, in the necessity of his hunger—loaves which it was not lawful for laymen to eat—because he wisely judged, that this positive law concerning laymen not eating them ought to yield to the law of nature, which dictates that in grave necessity of famine life ought to be preserved by eating any bread whatsoever, even loaves consecrated to God. Thus, SS. Paulinus and Laurence, and others, sold chalices and vessels consecrated to God, that by the money which they fetched they might afford help to the poor in their hunger and necessity. Therefore, saith Christ in effect, "Much rather is it lawful for Me and My disciples to pluck ears of corn on the Sabbath, that by the grains extracted from them we may relieve our hunger. For the sanctity of the Sabbath, forbidding servile work, such as plucking ears of corn, is a divine positive law, and ought to yield to the law of nature, which dictates that in hunger it is our duty to sustain life by any kind of food."

*Or have ye not read*, &c. *Profane*, viz., by slaying and skinning and cutting up the victims, by laying the wood in order, and by kindling a fire, by which the victims might be burnt in God's honour. These works, considered merely in themselves, are servile, and

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would profane the Sabbath unless piety excused them, and, instead of servile and profane, made them sacred and divine. The meaning is, As necessity excused David and piety the priests, so do both excuse My disciples from a breach of the Sabbath, for this plucking of the ears. For they follow Me as the Messiah, and are so intent upon My sacred doctrine that they have forgotten to prepare food. Observe the expression, *have ye not read?* The following words are nowhere found literally in Scripture, but they occur in sense in Numb. xxviii. and elsewhere, where the rites of sacrificing on the Sabbath are sanctioned. Hence it is an axiom of the Jews, "there is no Sabbath in the temple;" that is, no cessation from work, because of the slaying and burning the sacrifices.

*But I say unto you*, &c. For Christ, Who here speaks, allows His disciples to pluck the ears. Christ speaks of Himself in the third person out of modesty. The meaning is, If the sanctity of the temple frees from blame the sacrificing priests who break the Sabbath, a like cause excuses My disciples, for I am greater and holier than the temple. Yea, I am the Lord of the temple, to whom, in truth, all the victims in the temple were offered and sacrificed.

*But if ye had known what that meaneth*, &c. Syriac, *ye would not have condemned them* (my disciples), *since they are guiltless.* He cites Hosea vi. 6, which see. The force of the argument is, mercy is more powerful, and better than sacrifice or Sabbath, therefore for its sake it is lawful to violate the rest of the Sabbath. Wrongly, therefore, O ye Scribes, do ye condemn My disciples in this matter, for they are innocent, and free from all blame therein, because of the mercy which is here exercised. The mercy is, that I have permitted My hungry servants to pluck these ears on the Sabbath. Moreover, I enjoin upon them by My word, as well as by My example, that they should have compassion upon so many wretched perishing souls, and should procure their salvation, by teaching, admonishing, and praying for them, with zeal and care." To this applies that golden sentence of Simeon the Just (this is he who, as the Hebrews think, took Christ in His arms, and sang his last song

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*Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace*) *in Pirke Aboth*, i.e., *The sentences of the Fathers*, "The world rests upon, and is supported by, three things, 1. by the law, 2. by Divine worship, 3. by mercy.

*For the Son of man*, &c. I, who by nature am the Son of God, and have deigned to become the Son of Man, *i.e.*, man, am by this very circumstance, the Lord, that is the author and lawgiver of the whole Mosaic Law, and consequently also of the Sabbath. Therefore I am able to give to My disciples a dispensation with respect to it.

*And when he had passed over from thence*, &c. Luke adds, that this was done on another Sabbath. For Christ designedly chose the Sabbath day for a fresh miracle, that he might, again and again, refute the error of the Scribes, that it was unlawful to heal sick persons on the Sabbath.

*And behold a man having his hand withered*, &c. S. Jerome adds, "in the Gospel, which the Nazareni and Ebionites use, which we have lately translated from Hebrew into Greek, and which is called by very many persons the original (*authenticum*) of Matthew, this man, who had the withered hand, is called a mason. And he prayed for help in these words, I was a mason, gaining my livelihood by my hands: I beseech Thee, O Jesus, that Thou wouldst restore me to soundness, that I may not shamefully beg my bread." By the word *hand* understand *arm*: for χεὶρ, *i.e.*, *hand*, is made by Hippocrates to extend from the shoulder to the fingers. This man's arm was affected by a double disease. 1. A convulsion of the nerves. 2. Atrophy, for it was dried up for want of aliment, and was therefore naturally incurable.

*And they asked him*, *i.e.*, the Scribes and Pharisees asked Christ, whether it were lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? Then, as Mark relates (iii. 4), Christ in turn asked the Scribes another question, which was the solution of their own, *i.e.*, whether it were lawful to do good on the Sabbath, and heal the withered hand; or to do evil, *i.e.*, not to heal, and do harm? He intimates, not to do good to one who is in misery, when it is in your power, is to

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do him an injury; and not to save life, or a soul, when you can, is to destroy it. Since, therefore, this is a command of the law of nature, it is not forbidden by the positive law of the Sabbath; for that would be unreasonable.

*That they might accuse Him*, to the common people, as being either powerless, or unmerciful, if He did not heal the sick man; but to the chief priests, as a violator of the Sabbath, if He did heal him.

*But he said unto them*, &c. He means to say, ye Scribes teach the Sabbath is not broken, if any one pull out a sheep fallen into a ditch on the Sabbath day that the sheep may not remain in the ditch and suffer hunger, on the Sabbath. Much more therefore is it lawful to release on the Sabbath a man afflicted with sickness. Thus thought the Scribes in the time of Christ, but now some Jews observe the rest of the Sabbath so superstitiously that they are not willing on that day to pull a man out of a ditch or sewer, nor to suffer themselves, if they have fallen in, to be drawn out. Volater (*lib.* 3, *Geograph.*) relates an amusing thing, which happened in the reign of Henry III. of England. A certain Jew fell into a drain at Tewkesbury on the Sabbath, and on account of his religion would not be drawn out. The Christian earl of the place, seeing it, would not allow him to be pulled out on the next day, through reverence for Sunday. Thus the man was choked, and died before he was drawn out. The Jew said—

> "With putrid mud I'd rather choke,
> Than Jewish Sabbath should be broke."

To whom the earl replied,

> "The Christian Sabbath keep thou too,
> Friend Solomon, thou faithless Jew."

*How much rather is a man better* (more worthy, noble, excellent), &c. If it is lawful to release a sheep from calamity on the Sabbath, why not a man? Especially since in lifting out the sheep there would be need of considerable labour; but Christ was about to effect the healing of the sick man by a single word. How could this be a servile work? Wherefore Mark adds, *looking round about upon them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts.*

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*Then He saith to the man*, &c. Christ first by reason, now by a deed, viz., a miracle, confutes the ignorance of the Scribes, and makes manifest His own wisdom and goodness. Hear S. Athanas. (*Hom. de Semente, sub fin. tom.*), "Then Jesus saith to him, Stretch forth thine hand, for I do not touch thee, lest the Jews should have wherewith to accuse Me, lest with them, to touch, should be the same as to work. I act by word alone, for it has not been forbidden by God to speak on the Sabbath. If, then, a word performs the work, let him who says this word be held in admiration by you. Observe, too, the different way in which miracles are wrought. When Peter healed the paralytic at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up. The Lord, on the other hand, only commands, saying, Stretch forth thine hand, I give thee power to be healed. Thus He spake, thus He did, and the hand was restored."

*Allegorically.* 1. Beda says, Adam plucking the forbidden fruit, dried up the hand of the human race, *i.e.*, he deprived man of the power to be fruitful in good works. Christ restored that power by stretching forth His own hands upon the cross.

2. S. Jerome: "Until the coming of the Saviour, the hand of the Jews was withered in the synagogue, and the works of God were not done in it. Afterwards He came on earth, and the right hand of believers was restored by the Apostles, and rendered fit to do the first works."

*Tropologically.* Hear S. Anselm: "The hand that is withered, and is to be healed, is ordered to be stretched out, because the weakness of an unfruitful soul can be cured in no better manner than by the liberality of alms-giving. Wherefore John the Baptist advised the multitudes who asked him what they should do that they should not like dried trees be cast into the fire, do this one thing, 'He who hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he who hath food, let him do likewise.' And in Ecclus, iv. 36, 'In vain does a man stretch forth his hands to God, to beg remission of his sins who does not extend the same hands to confer a benefit upon the poor man who asks him.'"

*Going out*, &c. The Pharisees went out of the synagogue and left

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the multitude, in whose presence they did not dare to murmur against Christ.

*And He commanded them, that they should not make Him known. Commanded,* Gr. ἐπετίμησε, *i.e.*, He rebuked, threatened, commanded with threats, that they should not make known the miracles which He did, as well that He might not offend the Scribes, and excite them to greater envy and wrath, as that He might show how far removed He was from seeking glory of men.

*Behold My servant* (Vulg. *puer meus*) (*Messias*, Chald.), &c. *I will put my spirit*, &c. I will endow Him with the gifts of the Holy Ghost in His conception. The Heb. is, עבדי *Abdi*, i.e., *My servant*, from whence it is plain Isaiah here speaks of Christ, not as He is God, but as He is man, for as such He is God's servant.

It proves that Christ, by teaching and healing the sick, fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Himself, and His modesty, mercy, and equity; and therefore showed that He was the very Messiah foretold by Isaiah, and renowned for these gifts as by certain marks. Instead of, *whom I have chosen*, the Hebrew is, *I will receive Him;* LXX., *I will take Him up;* Chaldee, *I will move Him.*

*And he shall show judgment*, &c.; *i.e.*, what is just and equal: for this is the judgment of righteous judges. For Christ, as a law-giver, shall preach the Evangelical law, not only to the Jews, like Moses, but, by the Apostles, to all nations whatsoever.

*He shall not strive*, &c.; the meekness of Christ, and His gentle method of teaching, are here noted.

*A bruised reed*, &c. Syriac and Arabic, *and He shall not extinguish a lamp verging on extinction.* This is a genuine proverb, meaning that Christ will not contentiously rebuke and oppress those who are weak in faith, hope, and love, but will strengthen and kindle them by His own meekness, gentleness, and patience. Listen to the Fathers. S. Jerome says, "He who does not stretch out his hand to a sinner, nor carry a brother's burden, breaks the bruised reed; he who despises a spark of faith in the little ones, quenches the smoking flax." S. Hilary: "He shows that He might easily break the persecutors as a broken reed, and quench their

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fury;" but, says S. Augustine, "He spares them because He came not to judgment." Rabanus says, "The bruised nations were not broken, but were reserved for salvation: neither were the Jews, who were agitated by the wind, condemned immediately, but were patiently borne with."

*Until he bring forth*, &c., *i.e.*, until He lead *judgment, i.e.*, justice, or faith, and gospel sanctity, *to victory*, so that it may indeed have dominion over the whole world. Wherefore, the Vulgate in Isaiah translates *He will place* (as though a lord and conqueror) *judgment in the earth* (as it were a queen and lady governing all). The Hebrew is, *He shall bring forth judgment unto truth, i.e.*, He shall bring true judgment.

*And in His name*, &c. Instead of Gentiles, the Hebrew has *islands*, meaning most remote nations, dwelling in islands, who shall place all their hope in Christ the Saviour. I have expounded all this more at length on Isaiah xlii. 1, which see.

*Then there was brought unto Him a man having a devil.* Luke (xi. 14) says only that he was dumb: whence S. Augustine (*L. 2 de Consens. Evang. sec.* 37) is of opinion that Luke is speaking of another demoniac; but Luke does not say that he was not blind. Now the man was not blind and dumb from birth, or by disease, as Abul. and Barradi think, but was deprived of the use of his eyes and ears through the demoniacal possession. The demon, therefore, had not made him blind, nor taken away the faculty of speech, but only hindered the exercise of both. Whence, when the demon was cast out, without any other miraculous operation, the man began both to speak and to see. Thus S. Chrysostom, Enthym., Lyra, Jansen, Maldonatus. Hear S. Chrysostom: "O pestiferous craft of the devil! he seized upon, and obstructed both the ways, —sight and hearing—by which the man might believe." Hence S. Luke says *that demon was dumb*, &c., in its effects, because it made the man dumb whom it possessed. There was, then, in this miracle a threefold effect. For, as S. Jerome says, "In this one man three signs were wrought at one and the same time; the blind sees, the dumb speaks, the possessed of the devils is delivered."

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*Tropologically:* S. Jerome says, "What was then done literally is daily fulfilled in the conversion of believers, that, when the devil has been driven out, they may first behold the light of faith, and then open their mouths to speak the praises of God." Then S. Augustine says, "He, having a devil, is blind and dumb, who does not believe: and he is a slave of the devil, who does not understand, and does not confess the true faith, or who does not give praise to God." (*Lib.* I. *quæst. Evangel. q.* 3.) The devil then makes men dumb lest they should confess their sins and expel their poison; lest they should praise God; lest they should instruct their neighbours: but Christ by His grace, looses their mouths to confess, to praise, to teach. Wisely saith S. Bernard (*in Sententiis*) "Why art thou ashamed to speak of thy sin, when thou wast not ashamed to do it? or why dost thou blush to confess to God, from whose eyes thou canst not be hid? And if thou art so grievously ashamed to expose thy sin to one man, a sinner himself, what wilt thou do in the day of judgment, when thy consciousness of guilt will be exposed to all?"

*And all the multitudes were amazed,* &c. ἐξίσταντο, *i.e.*, were astonished and admired so that they, as it were, were rapt out of themselves in an ecstasy, at seeing so many and so great miracles of Christ; wherefore they said, No Prophet hath done so many miracles as Jesus hath. Therefore He is greater than them all. Consequently, He is the Son of David, the Messiah promised to David, whom we are all eagerly expecting.

*When the Pharisees heard it,* &c. The Pharisees were so blinded by their envy and hatred of Christ, that when they could not deny His miracles so clearly attested, they slanderously said, that they were magical, and not wrought by power of God, but by Beelzebub. They made Christ to be a magician who had a familiar demon, by whose power He wrought miracles.

*But if Satan cast out Satan,* &c. It means the kingdom of Satan upon earth could not stand, if Satan, *i.e.*, one devil were constantly to rise up against another devil, and fight with him, so that the inferior should be continually striving to cast out his superior from men. Thus you, O ye Scribes, behold Me, continually and assiduously,

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with hostility punish the devils, and expel them from the souls and bodies of men. Therefore, not by the help of Beelzebub, but by the power of God, I cast them out, Neither indeed is Beelzebub so foolish as to send the devils who are subject to him, to drive out one the other. For by so doing he would destroy his and their kingdom. So also mutinous soldiers, when they rebel against their prince are closely and intimately united among themselves, for they know, if they should disagree, they would easily be overthrown by their prince. I have spoken of Christ's hostility to the devils; because Apollonius of Tyana, as Philostratus testifies in his life, and magicians cast out devils, but by collusion with them, that they may entice men to sorcerers, and to sorcery, *i.e.*, fellowship with the devil. But Christ proves by what follows, that He had no fellowship with the devil. I spoke also of habitual warfare; for frequently strife and battle will arise among the devils for the possession of a man. An aged priest, worthy of credit, who had discharged the office of exorcist for many years and expelled devils at Rome, once told me he had seen with his eyes, and heard with his ears, two men possessed with devils, contending and fighting with one another, in the Church of S. Matthew. The devil who possessed one of the men was of a higher order and superior to the other; and he wished to cast out the other devil, as an inferior, from the man whom he possessed. But the inferior devil resisted, and greatly abused his superior; and among other things, he said to him, "Thou art an infernal devil, and by the just judgment of God being banished to hell, art far more heavily punished than I am, who am not an infernal devil, but am permitted to live here in the air, because I did not rebel against God as thou didst, but only clave and consented to Lucifer, as a subject to my superior." But such things as this are very uncommon and are succeeded by peace, even as these two devils after a short time laid aside their contention, and rested, and held their peace. For although those who are damned, and the devils, burn with pride, wrath, and hatred one against another, and quarrel, and tear one another in hell like dogs; nevertheless, on earth they must agree among themselves, in order that they may establish their kingdom and dominion over men.

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*But if I beg Beelzebub*, &c. This is Christ's second proof, by which He shows, that he cast out devils by the help of God not of Satan, By *your sons*, in the first place, SS. Hilar., Chrys., Theoph., Enthym. understand, *your Apostles*, for they were sons of the Jews. These writers think that this happened after Christ sent forth the Apostles, when the Apostles, by the help of Christ, cast out devils, and wrought many miracles. But it is more probable that this happened before the mission of the Apostles. Hence it is better to understand by *your sons*, Jewish exorcists, who, by the method handed down by Solomon, expelled demons. (*See Joseph. Lib.* 8, *cap.* 2.) Such exorcists were the seven sons of Sceva, a chief of the priests (Act. xix. 14). So Jansen, Tolet, and others.

*Therefore they shall be your judges.* In the day of judgment, they shall, by their deeds, condemn you, because ye have passed so perverted a judgment upon Me, namely that they have cast out devils by the help of God, but I by the assistance of Satan; although ye behold far greater proofs of the presence and operation of God in Me, than in your own exorcists. For who of them has healed so many sick, and raised so many dead persons as I have done? Who of them has preached such sublime and Divine doctrine as I preach? Therefore shall the Queen of Sheba and the Ninevites, by their faith and repentance in the day of judgment condemn the unbelieving Jews.

*But if I by the Spirit of God*, &c. If I by the power of God and the Holy Ghost not of Beelzebub, cast out devils, then that is true (and the Holy Ghost himself manifestly attests it by his concurrence) which I and John Baptist have put forward as the head and sum of our preaching—*the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* Ye see the kingdom of the devil by Me everywhere destroyed by My words, and by what I effect in the bodies and souls of men: and thus God's kingdom is begun by grace. This is what John says (1 *Epist.* iii. 8), *In this the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.* For as S. Leo says, "Those nails which pierced the Lord's hands and feet inflicted eternal wounds upon the devil; and the punishment of His holy limbs was the death of the hostile powers."

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*Or how can one enter into the strong man's house*, &c. Instead of, *or*, the Gr. has ἤ, which Pagninus translates *otherwise;* the Arab. *and;* others, *for.* A new reason is here given, the third, whereby Christ proves that He casts out devils by the help of God, not of Beelzebub. The argument is drawn from a comparison, thus: As he who attacks the castle of any strong or valiant man, like Samson or Hercules, to spoil it, is not able to accomplish it unless he first vanquish and bind the strong man; so in like manner, I Christ, who spoil the kingdom of Satan by leading sinners, his subjects, to repentance and salvation, must needs overcome and bind Satan himself; for, otherwise, he would not allow this spoliation. Satan therefore is My enemy, and has been overthrown by Me. He is not My friend or ally in casting out demons, as ye calumniously assert. The strong man then, in this passage, is the devil; the house is the world; the vessels are his arms; his goods, his instruments. The arms of the devil are fraud and deceit by which he entices men to sin; his arms are wealth, honours, riches. They are also inferior demons and wicked men, says S. Chrysostom. These the devil makes use of against us, to tempt and vex us. His goods are the souls of sinners, and the bodies of the possessed; yea the souls of the fathers detained in *Limbus* before Christ. All these Christ took away from the devil, and bound him in hell.

Moreover, the devil is here called a strong one, because he goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, as S. Peter saith. Job (40 *and* 41) depicts his strength and might under the figures of Behemoth and Leviathan. By *the strong man* understand Lucifer, the prince of the devils, the antagonist of Christ and S. Michael. For Lucifer, being conquered by Christ on the Cross, was thrust down to hell, that there he should remain, personally bound, until the day of judgment. Then he will be loosed for a little space, as John says (*Apoc.* xx.). Nevertheless, Lucifer is so bound in hell, that he is not only able to go forth himself, but even by means of his demons, whom he sends forth into the world. Yet he is not able to hurt men as much as he was before. For Christ has greatly restrained and diminished the power and might of the demons. S. Anthony was

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taught this by long experience, as S. Athanas. testifies in his *Life*. "The devil," he says, "was hooked by the Lord, like a dragon, by the hook of the Cross; and was taken in a drag-net, and was bound like a fugitive slave, and his lips were perforated by a ring and a bracelet, and he is not permitted to devour any of the faithful. Now, like a wretched sparrow, he is made sport of by Christ; now he groans at his companions, being trodden like serpents and scorpions under the heels of Christians. He who boasted that he drank up every sea, he who pretended that he held the world in the hollow of his hand, lo! he is conquered by you; lo! he is not able to prevent my entering the lists against him." And he confirms this by the devil's own confession (*cap.* 20). "I saw," he said, "a man of enormous height, whose head reached unto Heaven. When I asked him who he was, he said, I am Satan. And I, What seekest thou here? He answered, Why do all Christian people curse me? I answered, Hast thou not read, 'Because the swords of the enemy have failed at the end, and thou hast destroyed their cities?' (*Vulg.*) He said, Lo, now have I no place, I possess no city, I have no arms: the name of Christ sounds throughout all nations and all provinces, and the wilderness is peopled with choirs of monks. Let them, I beseech you, look at themselves, and not wound me without cause."

*He who is not with Me is against Me.* First, SS. Hilary, Jerome, Chrysostom, Theophylact expound *of the strong man, i.e.*, the devil The devil is not with Me, in such manner that he is against Me: and the things which I gather, he strives to disperse. This, therefore, is a fourth argument of Christ against the Scribes. Its force is as follows: They whose works are contrary, are themselves contrary. But My works and the devil's are contrary; therefore, I and he are contrary to each other. For, as S. Jerome says, "He, the devil, desires to hold captive the souls of men, but the Lord to deliver them. He preaches idolatry, Christ, the knowledge of the one God; the one draws to vice, the other recals to virtue. How, then, can they have agreement between themselves, whose works are contrary?"

2. You may take the passage more simply with S. Chrysostom,

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with an application to the Pharisees, thus: As when a sedition arises in a kingdom or city, and one part rises against another part, so that evil-disposed men endeavour to seize upon the commonwealth, and spoil it, as Catiline with his fellow-conspirators did at Rome; then it is necessary for good citizens to defend the state, and he who does not, but desires to be neutral, is looked upon as an enemy and a companion of the seditious: because, under those circumstances, all citizens are bound to help the city or republic with all their might. Thus, in like manner, I, who have proclaimed universal war with Satan, that I may expel him from his dominion over the world, look upon all men as it were citizens of the world, as subjects of Me, their true Prince. If, therefore, they are not with Me in this war, and if they do not fight under My banner, they are contrary to Me, and My enemies, and, as such, I shall treat them, and punish them. Such, therefore, are you, O ye Pharisees, who ought above all, as my subjects, and better instructed than other men, to receive Me as the Messiah, the Christ prophesied of in your law and the prophets, and to commend Me as such to the people; notwithstanding, ye are secretly My adversaries, and openly ye dissimulate as though ye were judges appointed to make inquisition concerning My life and doctrine.

Thus this saying of Christ is not opposed to what He says in Luke ix. 50—*He who is not against you, is on your part:* for there He is speaking of one who is really in doctrinal agreement with the Apostles, and therefore is with them and for them, although for some just reason he does not profess as much openly.

*Therefore I say unto you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven a man: but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven.* The word *Spirit* is in the genitive case, as is plain from the Greek πνεύματος. *The blasphemy* therefore *of the Spirit* is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Whence the Arabic translates, *Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit;* Syriac, *Blasphemy against the Spirit of Holiness.*

You will ask, what is this blasphemy? 1. Philastrius (*On the Heresy of Rotorius*) thinks it is heresy, especially that of Eunomius,



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who said that the Holy Ghost was not God. Thus also S. Ambrose (*Lib.* 1, *de Spir. Sanc. sec.* 3).

2. S. Hilary thinks that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is when a man denies that Christ is God. "The sin against the Holy Ghost," he says, "is to deny to God the power of virtue, and to take away from Christ His eternal substance, by which, because God came into man, man shall in turn come to God; since God grants pardon to all other things, whilst this only is without forgiveness."

3. S. Ambrose (*L.* 2, *de pœniten. sec.* 4) thinks it is schism; also Simony, the sin whereby, for example, Simon Magus wished to buy the Holy Spirit of S. Peter.

4. Origen says it is every mortal sin after Baptism; committed, that is, after the grace of the Holy Spirit received in Baptism. Moreover, Pope Gelasius (*de Anath. vinc.*) understands by it sins which are not forgiven, either in this world, or in the world to come. But he thinks it refers to sinners who do not wish to repent. For he says, that man makes the sentence against himself irrevocable who wills to continue in such a state as that he cannot truly be forgiven.

5. S. Cyprian (*L.* 3, *ad Quirinal, N.* 28) says, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is every sin committed against God: but blasphemy against the Son of Man is every sin committed against man.

6. The same Saint (*L.* 3, *Epist.* 14) thinks blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is denial of the faith in persecution.

7. Richard of S. Victor says, it is to hate and revile God.

I have summarily embraced eighteen expositions of the Fathers (viz., eleven of the Latin Fathers and seven of the Greek) in the foregoing paragraphs.

Lastly, theologians—and from them, catechists—out of various expositions of S. Augustine, collect six sins against the Holy Ghost; namely, presumption, despair, striving against known truth, envy of fraternal charity, impenitence, and obstinacy. They say that these are called sins against the Holy Ghost, because they are committed through undoubted wickedness against the goodness of God, which

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is an attribute of the Holy Ghost. Thus, likewise, sins which are committed through infirmity are said to be done against God the Father, because power is one of His especial attributes. And sins which are done through ignorance, are said to be done against the Son, because of His attribute of wisdom.

Note, therefore, that Christ is here speaking not of every sin against the Holy Ghost, but only of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which may take place by words; and the same reasoning will apply to thoughts and actions, as when anyone reviles works manifestly divine and miraculous, which God works for the salvation of men, by which He confirms faith and truth. Such a work is the casting out of devils; and because such works proceed from the goodness and holiness of God, they are attributed to the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son by procession and inspiration, as Love, Goodness, and Holiness. When, therefore, anyone calumniates such things, and knowingly out of malice ascribes them to an unclean spirit (as these Pharisees did), such an one is said to commit blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; for such an one directly fights against God and takes from Him His holiness and purity. The whole argument is expressed in the following syllogism:—

The author of the miracles which Christ performs is, according to you, O ye Scribes, Beelzebub:

But God the Holy Ghost is, in truth, the Author of these miracles:

Therefore, according to you, God and the Holy Ghost are Beelzebub.

What more horrible can possibly be said? What greater blasphemy can be imagined? S. Basil adds that there are such persons even now, who ascribe the fruits and actions of the Holy Ghost to the opposing unclean spirit. We many of us do this, when we call earnestness ambition, and impute the calumny of anger to one who is only moved by zeal and righteous indignation. Moreover, Christ opposes this blasphemy against God and the Holy Ghost to that blasphemy against the Son of Man by which some who were offended



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at Christ's human conversation, calumniated what He did as man, as when they called Him *a wine bibber*, and *a friend of Publicans and sinners*. This was something more excusable, and less unworthy of forgiveness, because it had respect to Christ as Man rather than as God.

*Shall not be forgiven*: Arab. *Shall not be relaxed*, i.e., shall with difficulty, and seldom be forgiven. For this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is most horrible, inexcusable, and altogether unworthy of pardon, and, considered simply in itself, takes away and excludes all medicine, and means of obtaining forgiveness. For such a blasphemer places himself in diametrical opposition to the Holy Ghost, and drives Him from him, yea blasphemes Him: the Holy Ghost, I say, by whom alone he could be absolved, healed, and sanctified. Similarly, we call an incurable disease one, which does not admit of medicine, and rejects every kind of food. Nevertheless a blasphemer does not shut up the hand of God, so that God cannot have mercy upon him, although unworthy; and convert him, as He converted S. Paul, who confesses that he had been a blasphemer against God (1 Tim. i. 13).

*And whosoever shall speak a word*, &c. Christ declares the same truth in still clearer words. *A word*, anything injurious, reviling, blasphemous, *it shall be forgiven him*, it is remissible, and is readily forgiven to the penitent. From hence, it is plain against the Novatians, that all persons who have lapsed into heinous sins, should be admitted to penance.

*But whosoever shall speak against the Holy Ghost*, &c. Syriac, *whosoever shall revile the Holy Ghost.*

Here, first, Origen is condemned, who extended repentance, pardon, and salvation, to all sinners, after this life. For he said, after the great year of Plato, all things would be restored afresh, and that Judas would be saved; and Lucifer, together with the devils and the damned, would be brought back to heaven.

2. S. Aug. (21 *Civit.* 24), S. Greg. (4 *dialog.* 39), Isidore, Bede, S. Bern., and others, quoted by Bellarmine (*Lib.* 2. *de Purgat. sec.* 4), prove from this passage, that there is a Purgatory after this life.

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For it would be unmeaning to say, *shall not be forgiven . . . . nor in the world to come*, if there were no remission of sins in the world to come. Thus a person would speak vainly who said, I will never marry a wife, neither in this world, nor in the world to to come, since no wife can be married in the world to come. Mark adds, and gives greater force to the saying : *but shall be guilty of eternal damnation.* Moreover mortal sins are expiated in Purgatory, so far only as pertains to their punishment, but venial sins as regards both fault and punishment.

*Either make the tree good*, &c. This is Christ's fifth argument, and as S. Jerome says, forms a dilemma, from which it is impossible to escape. 1. And plainly, this tree is Christ. *Make*, i.e., *appoint, assert.* Either approve and praise Me, together with My works, which seem to you to be laudable ; or condemn Me, with My works as a bad tree. He means, you, O ye Pharisees, praise My works, and yet condemn Me the author of them. But if ye praise the works, ye ought likewise to praise their author. Or if ye condemn the author, ye ought also to condemn the works. Otherwise ye flatly contradict your own selves. 2. S. Jerome by *tree* understands the *devil*, to whom the Scribes attributed the works and miracles of Christ. As thus, "If ye praise My works, then ye ought also to praise the devil, to whom ye ascribe them; which is most absurd."

3. S. Aug. (*Serm.* 12. *de Verb. Dom.*), by *tree* understands the *Pharisees* themselves. If ye wish to be, and to be accounted good, do good works, namely, praise good men and good things. For if ye do evil, as in truth ye do, when ye condemn Me and My Divine works, ye must needs confess yourselves to be bad and wicked calumniators, for a calumniator is known by his calumnies, as a tree is known by its fruit. From hence S. Aug. gathers the moral argument. "First," he says, "a man must be changed, that his works may be changed. For if a man remained in that which is bad, he cannot have good works : if he remain in that which is good, he cannot have bad works."

*O generation of vipers*, &c. Christ here calls the Pharisees *vipers*, for this special reason, that they, like vipers, uttered viperous words

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and calumnies, by which they endeavoured to defame Christ and cut Him off. For they had a viper's heart, that is a heart full of the poison of envy, pride, hatred and malice against Christ, from which they belched forth those viperous and deadly calumnies.

*Out of the abundance of the heart*, &c., *i.e.*, from that which abounds in the heart, which the heart often thinks about and loves, *that, the mouth speaketh.* If the heart, *i.e.*, the mind and the will, abound in goodness and charity, a man speaks good and loving things; if in the gall of malice and envy, he speaks words of gall and envy and bitterness; as ye do against Me, O ye Pharisees. Whence S. Chrysostom says, "if the words spoken by them are so evil, how great malice, think ye, do they have in their hearts, where God is the only witness? Wherefore, when thou hearest a man speaking evil, much greater may you consider is the wickedness which his words demonstrate. For what is spoken outwardly is but the super-effluence of that which is within, with which he has vehemently attacked you. For if what is spoken by them is so evil, how great is the root of thought which imagines the words? Do you wish then to know what anyone has in his heart, consider what he says; what he has most frequently on his lips, for in that his heart abounds."

*A good man*, &c. He explains the abundance of the heart by a *treasure*, that is, a heap and accumulation. A good man, therefore, from the good heap of good thoughts and affections which he accumulates in his mind, brings forth good words and works. But an evil man, from the evil treasure and heap of evil affections, brings forth evil words and works. Hear S. Chrysostom, "He shows, either that the Jews themselves, blaspheming God, make manifest from what treasure house they draw their blasphemy; or else, the sentence is connected with what went before, that as a good man cannot bring forth evil things, nor an evil man good things; so neither can Christ do bad works, nor the devil good works."

*But I say unto you, for every idle word . . . . give an account* (Arab. *an answer*). *Give an account, i.e.*, to Christ the Judge. Christ shall require of them an account of idle words; and if they are not able to render it, He will punish them. There is here a catachresis, as

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appears from the following verse. So SS. Hilary, Chrysostom, Jerome, and others. It is a Hebrew construction. For the Hebrews put the relative, with its antecedent, in the nominative case. The meaning then is, as S. Jerome says, "If he who speaks an idle word, which by no means edifies the hearers, is not without peril to him who speaks it, and if in the day of judgment every one shall give an account of his words; how much more shall ye, who blaspheme the works of the Holy Ghost, and say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub, give an account of your calumny? Again, like idle words, so too every idle thought, wish, and action, is at least a venial sin."

You will ask, what is meant by *an idle word?* The Gr. is ἀργόν, as if ἀεργόν, that is *inert, without art and work, lacking fruit and utility.* First, Theophylact and Euthymius translate *idle, calumnious.* With them S. Chrysostom agrees, who says, "It is an idle word because it is false." He adds, "Some say, because it is vain, such as gives rise to inordinate laughter: or shameful or immodest."

2. And genuinely, an *idle word* is one that is vain, frivolous, ludicrous, which brings good neither to the speaker, nor to the hearer, even though it be injurious to no one, nor, in itself, reprehensible. Thus S. Jerome, "an idle word is what is spoken without profit either to the speaker, or the hearer, if omitting to speak of serious things we speak of what are frivolous and old wives' fables. But a man who utters what is scurrilous, or anything immodest, will be accounted guilty, not of idle, but of wicked words." S. Greg. (*Hom. 6. in Evang. sub finem*), says: "An *idle word* is one which is devoid of right usefulness, or the reason of just necessity. Turn ye therefore your idle words into endeavours after edification. Consider how swiftly the time of this life passes away; how swiftly the strict judge shall come." S. Bern. says, in his sermon of the threefold keeping of the hand, the tongue and the heart: "*An idle word* is one of which we can give no reasonable account, one which is without reason. Let none of us, brethren, think lightly of the time we spend in idle words. For now is the accepted time, now is

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the day of salvation. The word flies, and cannot be recalled. Time flies, and cannot be recovered; nor does foolish man consider what he loses. Let us chat, they say, to pass away the time. O meanwhile the hour, the time is passing away, which the mercy of thy Maker is giving thee to repent, to obtain pardon, to acquire grace, to gain eternal glory; the time is passing, in which you ought to propitiate the Divine mercy, to hasten to the society of the angels, to sigh for thy lost inheritance, to breathe after the promised felicity, to stir up thy weak will, to weep for the sins thou hast committed." *An idle word* then, according to S. Bern., is one spoken without reasonable cause. Such therefore is not one which is spoken pleasantly, to console the afflicted, or to exhilarate those who are sick and sad. Neither is it one which teaches human wisdom, as when the words and deeds of others are related, with this end, that, from them, we may learn to act and speak prudently. S. Basil goes further, and says that for a word not to be idle, a pious intention is required. But he is speaking to Religious, whose profession calls them to deal with and speak of holy things. He says: "An *idle word* is one which is not for edification in the Lord; for such grieves the Holy Ghost." For like as it is the part of a human being to act and speak according to the rule of right reason, and of a Christian according to the law of Christ, so it is the part of a Religious to speak according to the dictates of religion and piety. Whence S. Bern. says: "Thou hast consecrated thy mouth to the Gospel; it is no longer lawful for thee to open it for jests."

1. Then a pious intention is not required absolutely, that a word should not be idle. It is sufficient that it should, in some manner, be conducive to use, and human prudence. For thus the sailor speaks of the winds, the ploughman tells of oxen. Were it otherwise, nearly every word of artificers, of merchants, and men of the world would be idle.

2. Gabriel Vasquez (1. 2. *disp.* 52. *in fine.*) teaches that an *idle word* is not one uttered with this end only in view, that a man should give counsel with respect to any infirmity or want of nature: As for example, if one should say, when he is cold, I am frozen; I desire the fire, that I may drive away the cold.

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This *idleness* of thoughts, words, and works is, as it were, a wastefulness of time and human actions, which, other things being equal, is worse than waste of riches and fortune. For a small portion of time has been given us by God, in which to provide for a blessed eternity: and every moment of it we may, by thinking, speaking, and acting well, be acquiring for ourselves the greatest degrees and treasures of glory and blessedness, all which treasures are wasted by this idleness of words and works, as S. Bern. has rightly remarked. Everyone is bound to do and say all things in such manner as that they may be fitly referred to God, that is to say, that they should be adapted to please and obey Him, according to those words of the Apostle, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.) Otherwise they are idle, *i.e.*, useless for the final end of man. But for this it is required that they should be directed by right reason, and should be honest. For everything that is honest, and nothing but what is honest is pleasing to God.

God has given us a mouth, that we should pray to Him and praise Him; and that we should speak what is useful and salutary to ourselves, or to our neighbours. But he who speaks what is idle and unprofitable, abuses his mouth, contrary to the mind and appointment of God. "For neither," as S. Ambrose says (in Ps. cxix. Serm. 22) "is it of small peril to speak of worldly and idle things, when we have such wonderful works of God to speak about. Let the righteous man be resolved to say with holy David, My tongue shall speak of Thy word, for all Thy commandments are equity (Vulg.); and thus let him shut out all idle words."

From what has been said, it is plain that many idle things are done and said by most men, of which they will have to render an account to God. Wherefore, that they may provide a remedy against this evil, let them accustom themselves to do and say nothing without premeditation. In the second place, let them learn to speak sparingly, and only about good and useful things. 3. Let them for some days collect their mind and thoughts, and consider seriously the actions, reasons, objects, and intentions of their life; that if they

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be depraved or idle, they may correct them, and aim at some definite end for their whole life and all their actions, that in all they may seek God's glory and their own salvation and perfection. Moreover, let them each morning daily conceive this intention, and offer it to God, and frequently renew it through the day; that thus they may gain a habit of referring all their words and actions to this end. By this means they will at length always have this end (virtually) in sight, even though they may not actually think about it. For a good intention changes our words and actions, so that from being indifferent or idle they become honest, holy, and are rewarded with heavenly glory. Cassian tells of the Abbot Machetes, who, when idle things were being related, fell asleep; but, when spiritual things were spoken of, was always wakeful. He used to say that the devil was the author of idle words, and that he had found it out by the following proof: When he was discoursing about spiritual things, almost every one fell asleep; by-and-bye if he related some idle tale, he saw them all wake up. This caused him to groan, saying, Who is the author of this, unless it be he to whom idle things are pleasing, spiritual things displeasing—that is, the devil?

*For by thy words*, &c. Not only of works, but also of words, must we have a great care, since of both account must be given to God. They are both the fruit of the same tree—that is, of the will—whether it be good or bad. Wherefore thy words, no less than thy works, shall justify thee, if they be righteous and holy; or shall condemn thee, if they be depraved and perverse. They shall justify, I say—that is, shall not only declare thee just, but shall also make thee just, or more just, if they proceed from the love of God and true repentance. But they shall condemn, and render thee liable to punishment, if they be idle, wanton, quarrelsome, and so on. For those who are condemned by Christ in the Day of Judgment shall be punished, not only on account of mortal, but also of venial sins; yet, according to the gravity and desert of each, more or less severely.

*Then certain of the Scribes—a sign*, &c.; S. Luke (xi. 16) adds, *from Heaven*. These were some of those men who brought the false accusa-

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tion against Christ, that He cast out devils by the help of Beelzebub. This is plain from S. Luke xi. 16. When they had been refuted by Christ, because they did not wish to seem overcome and convicted of falsehood, they pressed Him to confirm what He said by a sign, that is, by some celestial miracle. As thus: Thou sayest that Thou workest miracles by the help of God; if it be so, cause that God may attest that this is true by some sign from Heaven, by which He may signify that Thou art sent by Him, and dost cast out devils by His power. But the many diseases which were healed, the many dead who were raised up by Christ, with this object—that He might show them that He was the Messiah, sent by God the Father—ought to have been sufficient for them. But for the unbelieving and false accusers nothing is sufficient; and if one thing be granted, they ask, as a subterfuge, another and another. The meaning is this: Thy miracles, O Christ, are in the earth and of the earth, but we wish to see celestial miracles in Heaven. For God, Whom Thou assertest to be the Author of these miracles, dwells in Heaven. Cause, therefore, that fire may come down from Heaven, as Elias did; or that the sky may flash with new and marvellous thunders and lightnings, as Samuel did (1 Sam. vii. 10); or that the sun should stand still, as Joshua did. Thus S. Jerome: Tacitly, therefore, they scoff at Christ's miracles done on earth, as though they were tokens of Satanic influence; and they tempt Christ, that they may falsely accuse Him. But although He had shown such a sign in Heaven, they would immediately have sought a subterfuge, and would have required some other sign. For this is the disposition of all curious and cavilling persons, especially infidels and heretics.

*He answered and said—an evil generation—and*, that is, *but*, &c., *generation* (Gr. γενεὰ, i.e., *nation, race*) *adulterous*, i.e., *faithless and* unbelieving, because leaving God their husband to whom they had been betrothed by circumcision, they clave to the devil. Hence infidelity and idolatry are often called *adultery* by Ezekiel (cap. 16) and others. So Theoph. says, "He calls them an adulterous generation, because they forsook God, and clave to the devil." 2 *Adulterous, i. e.*, degenerate from the faith and character of Abraham, Isaac and the

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rest of the Patriarchs. For they believed in Messiah, but these would not acknowledge Him when He was present, and proving Himself by so many miracles to be Messiah. For Messiah was the husband of the synagogue of the Jews, and is now the Spouse of the Christian Church, as is plain from Eph. v. 32. For thus the Hebrews called spurious, *i.e.*, degenerate children, *bene nechar*, i.e., *strange children*, or rather, children of a strange, that is to say, an adulterous father.

*But no sign*, &c. This perverse n ationof theJews asks of me a sign from Heaven, but I will not give it a sign, except a sign from the earth, that is, from the deep. I will not grant to the Jews any other sign than what I formerly promised, when I said, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up;" but He spake of the temple of His body (S. John ii. 19, 21). (He meant the sign of the Resurrection, which is the sign of the prophet Jonah, because it was pre-figured by Jonah.) For this Jonah clearly showed, who I am, why I died, why I am crucified, in respect of which they are offended; in truth that I am Messiah, the Tamer of Death and Sin, the Saviour of the World, and the Lord of Heaven and Earth. For the keepers of the sepulchre told the Jews that Christ was risen from the tomb; the Jews themselves saw the empty sepulchre, and the Apostles proved Christ's resurrection by many miracles. Wherefore many Jews at the time, and afterwards all nations, believed in Christ raised from death. For the Jews did not expect a humble and poor Messiah, but one who was rich and glorious. Such they beheld Christ in His Resurrection, Ascension, and Mission of the Holy Ghost. Whence they at that time acknowledged Him, and accepted Him as Messiah, according to what Hes aid in John viii. 28. *When ye have lifted up the Son of Man*, on the Cross, *then ye shall know that I am He:* for I shall rise gloriously from the cross and death.

But the unbelieving Jews were likewise compelled to acknowledge that Christ was Messiah, for after His Resurrection He sent Titus and Vespasian, who destroyed Jerusalem and Judea, because of His unjust death at the hands of the Jews. Thus S. Chrysostom, for at that time there was a complete destruction of the nation, although

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it still endures, and shall endure until the end of the world. A righteous and avenging God brought this upon them on account of their crowning wickedness in killing Christ. This destruction is the most evident token that the Jesus whom the Jews put to death was the Messiah. Wherefore Christ brings forward this sign of Jonah, as it were a sign of the condemnation of the Jews by the Ninevites, for the Ninevites believed Jonah and repented, but the Jews would not believe Christ, and were therefore cut off. Maldonatus thinks that Christ gave the Jews who sought a sign from Heaven, a sign from earth, that they might be condemned; for it behoved that they who sought a sign deceitfully should be confounded.

*For as Jonah was*, &c., *in the heart*, i.e., *in the lowest part of the earth*, within the earth, as the heart is within the human body. When Christ died upon the cross, as His body was placed in the tomb, so did His soul descend into the *Limbus Patrum*, which is near the centre of the earth.

You will ask, how Christ was three days and nights in the sepulchre and Limbus: for He was there only on Friday and Saturday nights, and rose at day-break on Sunday? 1. Alcuin (*L. de. Divinis Off. sec. de. Coena. Dom.*) gathers from this place that Christ lay in the tomb three whole days and nights, or 72 hours, and consequently rose again at the end of Easter Monday. But this is certainly a mistake. The constant tradition of the church is that Christ rose on the Lord's day.

2. Greg. Nyssen (*Orat. 1 & 2 de Resurrec.*) computes these three days to begin on Thursday. He is of opinion, that when on the evening of that day Christ instituted the Eucharist, He offered Himself to God under the species of bread and wine by means of the unbloody sacrifice. The soul of Christ was separated from the body, but that this was done in a secret and invisible manner, and that then the soul of Christ went down to Hades, and that thus He pre-accomplished His death, which the Jews were visibly to bring about on the following day upon the cross. But this, too, is an error. For there is really in the Eucharist the soul of the Living Christ, that is to say, in His body and blood contained under the species of bread and

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wine. It is there, I say, not indeed by virtue of the words of consecration, but by natural concomitance. For in the Eucharist there is Living Christ, with His Soul, even as He is outside the Eucharist. Thus the Council of Trent defines (*Sess.* 13, *sec.* 2). It would have been otherwise if any of the Apostles had consecrated the Eucharist during the *triduum* of the Passion. For then the Body and Blood of Christ would have been in it separated from His Soul, for in this manner they were in Christ Himself now buried. For Christ was then dead, not alive.

I say then, that the expression *three days and three nights* is here only a periphrasis and description of a natural day. The two integral parts of such a day are day and night, or light and darkness. Christ makes use of this periphrasis because Jonah, His antitype, did the same. (Jonah i. 17.) We must not understand that these days, are three artificial days as opposed to nights, as if during three days, in which the sun is above the horizon, Christ lay in the tomb; for this was not the case. You must consider these three natural days to be not whole days but parts of days, namely, the latter part of Friday; when Christ being taken down from the Cross, was laid in the sepulchre, the whole of Saturday, and part of the Lord's day. For although the Hebrews reckoned their civil days from one sun-rise to another, like the Chaldeans and the Persians (*Beda de ration. temp.*), yet they computed their sacred days, such as the Passover, from evening to evening. Thus S. Jerome, Theophyl., Euthym., and S. Aug. and commentators, *passim*, explain the meaning of these three days. Hence Christ is constantly spoken of as rising on the third day, or after three days, without any mention of nights.

But in this place, according to this computation, there were but two nights in which Christ lay in the tomb, viz. Friday and Saturday nights, and yet *three nights* are expressly mentioned. Others therefore answer more fully and plainly; that these three days and nights are reckoned according to the Roman computation. For the Romans were at that time, masters of Judea, and had introduced their own methods of computing time in civil affairs. The Romans reckoned from midnight to midnight, as Christians do in their fasts and

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festivals. (*See Macrob. L.* 1. *Saturni c. Gell. L.* 3. *c.* 2. *Pliny. L.* 2. *c.* 77. *and others*). According to this reckoning it is clear Christ remained in the tomb during a part of three days and three nights. He was buried on Friday before sunset; and was in the tomb until the midnight of that day. After that He was in the tomb during the entire day and night of the Sabbath; and from the midnight of Sunday for about six hours until that dawning of the Lord's Day on which He arose. For the Passover was at that time about the equinox, when the days and nights are equal, each being about twelve hours long. But the Soul of Christ, immediately when He expired upon the Cross at the ninth hour, *i.e.*, at three o'clock in the afternoon, descended into Limbus, and there remained with the Fathers until the dawn of Easter Day. Now that the Jews made use of the Roman method of computing time may be learnt as well from other things, as because they borrowed the four watches of the night from the practice in use among the Roman armies. (*See Matt.* xiv. 25 *and elsewhere.*) Different nations had different methods of reckoning the beginning of the day. The Persians and Babylonians reckoned from sunrise to sunrise. The Athenians and Italians, from sunset to sunset. Astronomers from midday to midday. But the Egyptians and Roman priests reckoned from midnight to midnight: and this method has continued in the Roman Church. The Hebrews then in the time of Christ followed the method of the Romans, to whom they were subject. Franc. Lucas teaches that the Jews did not compute their Festivals from midnight as Christians do. The explanation given above is that of S. Anselm, *in Loco.* Isidore of Pelusium (*L.* 1. *Epist.* 114 *and* 212), D. Thom., (3. *p. q.* 46. *art.* 9), Suarez (3. *p. q.* 53. *disp.* 46. *sect.* 3. *in fine.*), and Baronius. (*A. C.* 34.).

*The men of Nineveh shall rise up*, &c. That is to say the Ninevites, who, with their king Sardanapalus, had thrown themselves into wickedness, and given themselves up entirely to the lusts of the flesh, when they heard Jonah thundering against them, and threatening them with destruction, believed him, and did penance. They therefore, in the day of judgment, shall accuse and condemn the Scribes and the Jews who would not believe Christ, their God and

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Lord, working so many miracles. They shall condemn them, I say, not so much in word as by their deeds, namely, by the example of their faith and repentance. It does not follow from hence that the Ninevites were saved; for shortly afterwards they returned to their sins like a dog to his vomit. (See what I have said in the Prefaces to Jonah and Nahum.)

*And behold a greater than Jonah is here.* For Jonah was a prophet and a servant: Christ is Messiah and the Lord. Jonah, remaining alive in the fish, alive came forth: Christ rose again from death and the grave, and restored to life, came forth. Jonah preached unwillingly: Christ of His own accord. Jonah was a foreigner among the Ninevites: Christ was of the same race as the Jews. Jonah threatened the destruction of Nineveh: Christ promised the kingdom of Heaven. Jonah did no miracle: Christ did very many. All the prophets prophesied of Christ: none of Jonah. Jonah cried aloud, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown:" Christ cried by His Apostles, "Yet forty years and Jerusalem shall be destroyed by Titus." Euseb. of Emissa (*Hom.* 2. *de Pasch.*), and S. Aug. (*Epist.* 49. 6), have collected further analogies between Jonah and Christ.

*The Queen of the South shall rise,* &c. Aegypt. *The Southern Queen.* Persian, *Queen of Thema* (Theman with the Hebrews and Orientals signifies the south). Ethiopic, *Queen Aseb.* The name, therefore, of this queen appears to have been *Aseb*, and to have been taken from the name of her kingdom, *Saba*, *Sabæa.* This is the opinion of some. But I maintain that *Aseb* is Ethiopic for the south, as Ethiopians at Rome have assured me. This is the Queen of Sheba, which is south of Judea (1 *Kin.* x.). Sheba, or Saba, is a country, and has two meanings. One Sheba was in the neighbouring Arabia; the other in remote Ethiopia, the capital of which was afterwards called by Cambyses Meroë, after the name of his sister. This queen is thought by many to have come from the Ethiopian, rather than the Arabian Sheba: because the Ethiopian Sheba was furthest off, and because Josephus calls her Queen of Ethiopia and Egypt. Wherefore afterwards the knowledge of scripture, and of the true God of the Hebrews, remained among the Ethiopians. From

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among them there came to Jerusalem, to worship God, a eunuch of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians. (*Acts* viii.) Pliny (*Lib.* 6, *c.* 29) says, that queens reigned over the Ethiopians, and bore the general name of Candace. Indeed, the Emperor of the Ethiopians, or Abyssinians calls himself *the Son of Solomon*. For the Ethiopian tradition is that their queen was married to Solomon, by whom she had a son, from whom the Abyssinian kings, who are now called *Prete-Tannes*, are descended. Pineda, however, refutes this tradition. The Abyssinians add that this queen Aseb reigned in Tigris, which is the largest province of Abyssinia, and that her son was called *Menile*, or *like*, because he was very like his father Solomon. Thus Euthymius, Jansen, Maldonatus, Toletus, Barrad, and others, think this queen came from Ethiopia; but others, with more probability, think she came from Saba, which is in Arabia Felix, where are the Homeritæ, in whose country spices and gold as well as camels are abundant. Again, she is said *to have come from the uttermost parts of the earth;* for Arabia Sabaea is distant from Jerusalem 606 leagues. It is, moreover, the furthest land in the direction of the *Mare Indicum*, or Arabian Gulf, for there the land ends, and the sea begins. Hence it is often called in scripture, a land very far off, as Jer. vi. Isaiah xliii. and elsewhere. Whence Nicephorus (*l.* 8, *c.* 35) says, Arabia Felix is Sabaea, and its boundaries extend to the ocean. Thus SS. Jerome, Cyril, Theodorus, Salmeron and others, whom Pineda quotes and follows.

*To hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here.* Christ speaks of Himself in the third person out of modesty. This comparison between the Jews and the Queen of Sheba has much emphasis, which is well brought out by Franc. Lucas. "The woman," he says, "was a Gentile, not brought up in God's discipline, but immersed in the business of a great empire; yet she was attracted by the fame of Solomon's wisdom, and undertook a most difficult journey from the remotest parts of the earth to Jerusalem, that she might make trial of his wisdom. This wisdom she wondered at above measure, and received Solomon's counsel, although he only discoursed concerning earthly things. But the Jews, the scholars of



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the Divine Law, would not receive Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the only teacher of the mysteries of eternal salvation, which had been hid from ages and generations, when He offered Himself to them, and asked and invited them to come to Him. Yea, they altogether rejected Him, although He gave them the most wonderful sign of the Resurrection. How much, therefore, did the Queen of Sheba excel the Jews! and with what justice and with what power, will she, in the Day of Judgment, rebuke them to their face for their obstinate ingratitude, unbelief, and disobedience to Christ!" The same reasoning will apply to the Ninevites. Therefore let priests, religious and others, who are abundantly supplied with God's grace, take heed that they use it rightly and diligently; for otherwise, the more they have received, the more severely will they be punished. Yea, in the Day of Judgment, laymen will triumph over them, even as Heathens and Turks will upbraid bad Christians, because if they had had their graces, they would have lived far more holily and religiously.

*When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man*, &c. Observe, Christ still continues to treat of the subject of demoniacal possession: for the possessed, whom He healed, were corporeally possessed by a demon, but the Scribes and the Jews, who reviled Christ's miracles, were spiritually possessed. Christ here speaks parabolically, after the manner of the Syrians. The meaning is: As a man who is an exile wanders through arid and desert places, so the devil when driven by the law of God from man, that is to say, from you, O ye Jews, who were the people of God, amongst whom God dwelt, and manifested Himself by prophecies and miracles, wanders through desert places, and seeks rest. But when he cannot find it save in man, and when he sees that ye despise God's grace, which I offer you, then he eagerly returns to you as to a house that is empty and swept, as to a place prepared and adorned for him. Then he takes seven, *i.e.*, many other companions, more wicked than himself, and they joyfully inhabit that house, *i.e.*, your souls; and that they may not be again expelled, and that they may make you more wicked,

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with that object in view they cause you to blaspheme Me, My doctrine, and My miracles, and to say that I cast out devils by Beelzebub, and that ye may at length crucify Me, which is of all wickedness the chief and the greatest. Wherefore God will punish you with utter destruction by Titus, and will cause you to be without God, without Messiah, without law, or temple, or sacrifice, and without faith—yea, that ye shall think your own perfidy and blindness to be the true faith and the true light.

Moreover, *the house*, that is the soul, is empty, because it is without God, and devoid of His grace. It is *swept with besoms* (*Vulg.*) because all virtue, piety and goodness have been driven out of it, and the poison of impurity has been scattered in it, and the tapestry of pride hung about it. For such adornment as this is the adornment of uncleanness, and is pleasing to the devil who delights in nothing but what is impure and filthy.

Again, the devils are driven by God and His Saints into desert places, that they may not injure men. Thus Raphael bound Asmodeus in the deserts of Upper Egypt. (*Tobit* 8.) So also Isaiah says, (Isaiah xiii. and xxxiv.) that Babylon should be wasted and rendered a desert; and that *hairy creatures*, *Satyrs* and *Onocentauri*, *i. e.* demons in the shape of goats and monsters should dwell there. But the devil does not find rest in such places, for, as Abul. says, "The devil cannot rest, because he shall be tormented eternally, but he seeks the rest of his own evil will: for he is envious, and loves to injure men: and when he is able to injure them he rests after a fashion." He acts thus, partly from envy, because he grudges man the happiness of heaven, from which he himself has fallen; partly from hatred of God: and because he cannot injure God himself, he would injure man who is God's creature and image, that he may thus, as far as he can, do an injury to God.

*Mystically*, *dry places* are the souls of the Gentiles, in which, by the grace of Christ, the moisture of concupiscence is dried up. Hear S. Jerome, "The unclean spirit went forth from the Jews, when they received the law, and being driven from them, walked in the wilderness of the Gentiles. But when the Gentiles had believed in the



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Lord—finding no place among them, the devil said, I will go back to the Jews."

*And the last state of that man*, &c. This is the end and scope of the parable. Christ shows that relapsing into sin is worse than falling into it at first; even as a relapse into a disease of the body is worse than the original disease. S. Augustine says (*Epist.* 137), "I confess unfeignedly, before the Lord our God, who is the witness of my soul, from the time when I began to serve God, that I have not found any who have made greater progress in religion than those in monasteries. So too, in like manner, I have never found worse men than those who have fallen, being monks. And this is why I believe it has been written in the Apocalypse (*ch.* xxii.) 'He that is just, let him become more just; and he that is filthy, let him become more filthy.'" Thus Lucifer, who was the most fair of all the angels, became the worst of the devils. So too Judas, from an Apostle, became an Apostate, and the betrayer of Christ. So also Nestorius, Eutyches, Pelagius, Arius, and in our time Luther, Calvin, and the rest, their companions, from monks and priests, became apostates and heresiarchs. As it is commonly said, the best wine makes the sourest vinegar."

*While He was yet speaking to the multitude, behold His mother*, &c. You will ask, who were those who, in the Gospels, are called the brethren of Christ? The impure heresiarch, Helvidius, answered that they were children of the blessed Virgin who were born after Christ. For he denied Her perpetual virginity. But S. Jerome sharply and learnedly refutes him, in the work which he wrote against him.

2. The Greeks generally, with Euseb. (*H. E.* ii. 1), and of the Latins, SS. Hilary and Ambrose, think that they were children of Joseph, by a former marriage. But Joseph never had any other wife except the Blessed Virgin Mary. Peter Damian (*Epist.* 11, *c.* iv. *ad Nicol. Rom. Pont.*) says that this is the faith of the Church.

3. Hugh of S. Victor thinks they were descendants of S. Ann, the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and that S. Ann, besides Joakim the father of the Virgin, had two other husbands, of whom, those who

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are called the Lord's brethren, were begotten. But S. Hippolytus (*Ap. Niceph.* 2, 3) teaches that S. Ann had only one husband, Joakim. I say, therefore, that these persons were not properly the brethren of Christ, nor the offspring of the Blessed Virgin Mary, nor Joseph, nor S. Ann, but are called brethren, *i.e.*, cousins or relations of Christ, by a mode of expression common in Hebrew. In sooth, they were cousins, or really brothers of S. Joakim, or S. Ann, or rather brother's children, or sister's children of SS. Joakim and Ann, probably children of Cleophas, who was a brother of Joseph, the husband of the blessed Virgin Mary, according to the testimony of Hegesippus (*Eus. H. E.* iii. 11). For Joseph and Cleophas were sons of Jacob, the brother of S. Ann. Hear S. Jerome on the passage, "We, as it is in the book which we have written against Helvidius, say, that the Lord's brethren were not children of Joseph, but cousins of the Saviour, and children of Mary, the maternal aunt of the Lord, who is called the mother of James and Joseph and Jude."

*Stood without.* They sent a messenger into the house, to Christ, to call Him out.

*Seeking to speak with Him.* Not out of ambition and pride, that they might appear to be relations of so great a Teacher and Prophet, as S. Chrysostom and Theophylact think; but that they might take Him with them, and bring Him to Nazareth. For they said that He was beside Himself (*Mark* iii. 21). "For neither did His brethren believe in Him" (*John* vii. 5). Whether they said this because they really thought He was mad; or feignedly, in order that they might deliver Him out of the hands of the Pharisees. That for some such cause the Blessed Virgin called Christ forth, no pious person would doubt. But if they wished to take Him as a madman, they must have concealed their opinion from the Blessed Virgin Mary, and taken her with them that they might the more easily draw Christ away. For it is certain she knew perfectly that Christ was of sound mind. Wherefore she accompanied these brethren or relations of Christ from the desire of beholding Him.

*But one said to Him, Behold Thy mother,* &c. This person was the messenger whom the brethren of Christ sent to call Him out.

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*But he said: Who is My mother*, &c. Observe, Christ speaks thus, not as denying that He really had a mother, as if Christ were not a true man, but a phantasm born of a phantasm, as Marcion and the Manichees taught; nor yet as though He were ashamed of His mother and poor brethren, but either because this messenger was interrupting Him with too great boldness and importunity, by calling Him away from the preaching which He had begun; or rather, as S. Ambrose says, that He might show that He must be more intent upon the ministry given Him by His Father, than upon His affection for His mother; and that He must prefer spiritual to carnal relationships, where there is neither sex nor rank, but all are most nearly related to Christ, and by every tie, as though they were father, sister, and brother. For this is what Matthew adds concerning Christ, *And stretching forth His hand*, &c. The Arab. trans., *He pointed with His hand towards His disciples.*

*For whosoever shall do*, &c. Spiritually, as I have already said, not carnally. He speaks of *brother and sister*, because of either sex. The faithful soul is also the mother of Christ, because by teaching, exhorting, and counselling, she brings forth Christ in herself and others. Hear S. Gregory (*Hom.* 8 *in Evang.*), "We must know that he who is the brother and sister of Christ through believing, is made his mother by preaching. For he, as it were, brings forth the Lord, whom he infuses into the heart of his hearer." He subjoins the example of S. Felicitas, who by the spirit bore to God the seven sons, to whom she had given birth in the flesh, because she strengthened them in persecution, and animated them for martyrdom. These words of Christ were also exemplified in S. Victoria, a virgin martyr under Diocletian. She said to the pro-consol, who asked her, "Wilt thou go with Fortunatianus, thy brother?" who was a heathen; "No, for I am a Christian; and those are my brethren, who keep the commandments of God." Wherefore she was shut up in prison, and perishing by hunger, obtained the martyr's crown.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

3 *The parable of the sower and the seed:* 18 *The exposition of it.* 24 *The parable of the tares,* 31 *of the mustard seed,* 33 *of the leaven,* 44 *of the hidden treasure,* 45 *of the pearl,* 47 *of the draw-net cast into the sea:* 53 *and how Christ is contemned of his own countrymen.*

THE same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.

2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow.

4 And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up.

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them.

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing,

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and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them;* and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them.*

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which receiveth seed by the way side.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it:

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it;* which also beareth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy fields from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitudes in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them

35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

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36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man:

38 The field is the world: the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one:*

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

44 Again: The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 Again: The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls;

46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that had, and bought it.

47 Again: The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe *which* is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

53 And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

54 ¶ And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works?

55 Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?

57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

58 And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

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*At that time*, &c. Syriac, *by the sea shore:* When Christ, after His manner, had preached in the house, which He had hired for His dwelling in Capernaum, as I have said on c. iv. 13, He sent away the multitudes to attend to themselves and their affairs, and that He might refresh Himself and His disciples with rest and food. Bye and bye, since He knew that the multitudes were about to come to Him in such numbers that the house could not contain them, He went out to the wide, open shore of the Sea of Galilee; and there uttered the following parables.

*He went up into a ship:* from whence, as from a pulpit, He preached to the people assembled on the shore.

*A sower went out to sow:* Gr. ὁ σπείρων, i.e., *sowing*, Observe: Appositely are gospel doctrine and preaching compared to seed, and the harvest proceeding from it. For, as for the natural harvest there is need of seed, earth, sun, rain and wind, so also is there need of such things for the spiritual harvest. The seed is the word of God, or the gospel, and the preaching of it. The earth is the free will of all who hear. The sun is preventing grace, illuminating and inflaming the free will, that it may receive the Word of God so as from it to produce the fruits of charity and all virtues. The rain is grace, watering and promoting these good acts and motions of the free will. The winds are temptations which, by agitating them, cause them to take deeper root, and strengthen them. Lastly, there is need of patience, Gr. ὑπομονὴ, *i.e.*, endurance in the labours and troubles of ploughing, sowing, &c., and long waiting for the reward and fruit of the harvest.

Observe: the end and scope of this parable is, that Christ would teach that He Himself is the Sower, *i.e.*, the preacher of the gospel upon earth, that is to say, among men, but with different results among different people. For, first, not all who hear the gospel accept it; as seed, although sown in the earth, does not everywhere strike root in the earth. 2. Not all who believe persevere in faith, but some fall away under temptation; like seed which sprouts in stony ground, quickly withers by the sun's heat. 3. Not all, who persevere in faith, bring forth the fruit of good works; just as thorns choke

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seed springing up well in otherwise good ground, and prevent it from bearing fruit. 4. These things happen, not through the fault of the seed, *i.e.*, of the doctrine, but of the earth. It is the fault of the hearers, and that in various ways. It is partly on account of the rocks, partly on account of the thorns. The rock is the flesh, the thorns are the world, the highway is the habit of a worldly and licentious life, where the birds of the air, that is the devils, like most eager and voracious devourers of souls, snatch away the doctrine that has been preached, from the mind and memory, whilst they draw off those who are by the wayside, *i.e.*, men who are given up to the customs and business of the world, as well as those who are wandering, who are slothful and curious, from considering and penetrating into the doctrine heard, to their accustomed vanities. 5. The seed in the good ground is that which those receive in a good heart, who begin to ruminate upon it, and profit by it; they are in the best way, who apply themselves with all their might, to arrive at perfection in virtue. 6. Some seed bears less fruit, some greater, some the greatest. That is on account either of the greater sowing, *i.e.*, preaching and illumination of spiritual things, and the assistance of grace, or on account of greater efforts and co-operation of free will with grace. This is the sum of the whole parable, from which it is easy to understand it in all its parts. I will handle them briefly, one by one.

*Moraliter:* Let the preacher with Christ, who came forth from the house, even from heaven, impelled by the force of love, to the earth, go forth from the house of contemplation into the field of preaching, that what he has drank from God in prayer, he may pour forth upon the people; and preach, not so much by words, as by the example of a holy life. Again, he invokes God that what he speaks in the ear, God may speak in the heart.

*And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside,* namely, on the path or boundary, conterminous with the field, which is constantly worn and trodden down by the feet of passengers, and is therefore unsuitable for the reception of seed, and exposes it naked, to be carried off by the birds. We see a gradation here, for from the unsuitable ground for seed, He rises gradually to the less unsuitable, to the more suit-

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able, and the most suitable. The most unsuitable earth for seed is that by the wayside. The less suitable is the rocky ground. The more fit is the good ground which produces thorns. The most fit is that which is entirely good, rich, moist earth. Moreover, *the way* is a mind worn, and dried up by evil thoughts. Such a mind does not receive the doctrine of the gospel, which is contrary to its lusts; it does not perceive, nor understand it, because it is wholly intent upon fleshly allurements. Whence, says the Gloss, such are those, who neither are pricked by preaching, nor begin to do well.

*But other fell on stony ground*, &c. This seed could not strike deep root, therefore it began to germinate and spring up before the proper time. For that which is quickly produced, quickly perishes. He adds the cause.

*When the sun was risen, they were scorched*, Gr. ἐκαυματίσθη, i.e., *were burnt up*, both seeds and germs, by the burning heat of the sun. And because they had no root, they withered away. They had but a little earth, which was succeeded by the rock. Hence, partly from want of moisture, partly by the burning rays of the sun, they were dried up. The *rock* in this place, says Rabanus, means the hardness of an insolent mind, in which there is no deep mildness of an obedient soul. Whence, such are only pleased by the sweetness of the word, which they hear, and of heavenly promises for a short time; but they strike not the root of desire unto salvation. Therefore by the heat of the sun *i.e.*, the fury of persecution, are they burnt up, through impatience, because their mind does not firmly cleave to the word of God, and they lose the greenness of faith, says the *Interlinear*. S. Chrysostom says, "With regard to souls, that which is rock, may become good ground, that which is wayside, not trodden down; and the thorns may be destroyed. Christ was speaking to all, even as if He were providing for the future, how He might declare what I ought to do, and have not done. Hereby He teaches His disciples not to be slothful."

*But other fell among thorns*, &c., i.e., in land producing thorns. *And they grew*, Gr. ἀνέβησαν, i.e., *they ascended*, i.e., they grew more quickly than the good seed, which rises slowly, and by degrees. For

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tares spring up easily, wheat with difficulty. Therefore the tares choked the wheat just as it was coming into ear. The tares did this, both because they drew away the moisture and nourishment to their own roots; as well as because they deprived them of air and room to grow.

*But other fell on good ground*, &c. (Arab.) *For one a hundred, for one sixty, and for another thirty.* Good ground, if it be well cultivated, for one grain produces a hundred; other ground, less rich, sixty; other, more sterile, thirty. The good ground is a faithful and devoted conscience.

Observe, only the fourth part of the seed, namely, that which fell on the good ground, produced fruit; the three other divisions of the seed perished. Thus, but few profit by the word of preaching. By far the greater number who hear the word bring forth no fruit.

*He that hath ears of hearing* (Greek) *let him hear.* Christ makes use of this expression when the subject is obscure and symbolical, or when he would arouse the attention of his hearers. *Ears to hear*: He speaks of one who hears diligently the words of Christ, in order that he may receive them, and ruminate upon them, and obey them. For many heard Christ out of curiosity, for the sake of listening to something new. Such had not ears for hearing. So, even now, there are many who hear sermons for the sake of their eloquence—not that they may amend their lives.

*And the disciples*, &c. They meant to say, the uninstructed multitudes do not receive parabolic and symbolic discourses. Why, then, dost thou not speak to them in plain words, that they may understand them?

*He answered and said*, &c. (Arab), *ye have been endowed with the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, and they have not been endowed.* The reason why Christ spake to the multitude in parables was, because many among them were as yet unfitted for receiving the heavenly doctrine of the Gospel; and some, indeed, did not believe—yea, some derided. The scribes also reviled Christ, and accounted Him for a false prophet. Wherefore they had not *ears of hearing* such as Christ required. Christ, therefore, urges

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them to take hearing ears, and examine carefully His parables, and ask from Him the meaning of them, that thus they may make themselves fitted to receive the preaching of the Gospel. This if they would do, He promises clearly to expound what He speaks in parables.

Moreover, Christ indicates that this capability of receiving the Word cannot be obtained by our own power, but must be humbly asked of God. For this is the gift of God, which He gave to the disciples of Christ, and did not give to the rest, but left them in their blindness. It is as though He said, "Yours, O ye Apostles, is this grace and happiness, that God has given you faith in Me, and that, for this reason, I clearly tell you of mysteries, whilst I speak to others only in parables. For faith is the gift of God. Do ye, therefore, render perpetual thanks to God for this, and pray for others, that God would give them ears of hearing, as He has given you. For then will I explain My parables to them, as I shall explain them to you." Whence Mark has (4, xi.), *To them which are without, all things are done in parables.* That is, to the unbelieving who are outside of faith and of the Church, all things are spoken and done by Me, parabolically, *i.e.*, obscurely, by symbols and enigmas, that they may not despise and cavil at them, for as Bede says, "Not only the things which the Lord spoke, but also the things which He did, were parables," *i.e.*, signs of mysteries, hidden from the unbelieving Jews, according to the words, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine." Mark adds, *that seeing they may see, and not perceive*, &c. He means, they are blinded and obstinate, and thus they persevere in their blindness, and will not accept the light of truth, which I offer them. For this blindness is the punishment of past sins, which they have committed. All this will be more plain from what follows.

Observe: the word *that*, as Mark says, *that seeing they may see, and not perceive*, does not signify *cause* and *intention*, but *consequence* and *effect*. For Christ, in speaking parabolically, did not intend absolutely to blind them, but only to permit what was the consequence of His parables—namely, that the Jews, being blinded with

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envy and lust, although they saw so many miracles of Christ, and heard His heavenly wisdom, yet would not believe, nor understand what they saw and heard, but would be as though they had neither seen nor heard.

*For he that hath*, &c.; Arabic, *And he who has anything, it shall be given and added*, &c. The sentence is a species of proverb, as Salmeron and others say. It is most true: for to the rich things are given, from the poor there is always taking away. Similarly, God heaps upon His faithful and elect people (such as the Apostles were) new graces and benefits day by day, so that they abound in virtue and holiness: but from the unbelieving, the ungrateful, and the unworthy, He gradually takes away His gifts, both of nature and grace.

The meaning is: 1. He who has faith, to Him shall be given the knowledge of the mysteries of God's kingdom; for these cannot be known without faith. He, therefore, who hath not faith, from him shall be taken away the good which he hath. As though He said, To you, O ye Apostles, because ye believe in Me as the Messiah, it is given to hear the mysteries of God and of Heaven, by means of which ye are every day advanced more and more in hope and the love of God. But from the Scribes, who will not believe in Me, God will take away the little knowledge which they do possess of heavenly things. Yea, he will deprive them of Church, kingdom, priesthood, and country; and, as profane and perfidious, they will wander in misery over the whole earth. Thus SS. Jerome and Hilary and Euthym. explain.

2. They who *have ears of hearing*, who come to Me with sincere affection, with a pure desire of faith and truth, to them I will clearly reveal celestial verities; and I will assist them in the path of virtue, by which they may arrive at the kingdom of God. But they who have not this pure desire of the truth, but indulge in their own lusts and errors—as ye do, O ye Jews and Scribes—from them shall be taken away, by degrees, that little knowledge of Divine things which they do possess, and they shall become wholly blinded. Therefore, to you, O ye Jews, I, Christ, speak not clearly, but darkly in parables.

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As Theophylact says, "For he who hath a small spark of goodness, and does not stir it up by means of the Spirit and spiritual things must of necessity have it extinguished."

3. S. Augustine (*lib.* 1, *de Doctr. Christ. c.* 1) explains the word *have* to mean *use*, and applies it to preachers. Thus, the preacher who has doctrine—*i.e.*, who uses the doctrine given him by God, and diligently preaches it, and communicates it to others;—doctrine and words, which he may speak and preach, will never fail him, for God will suggest them. But if anyone does not make use of doctrine, he will gradually forget it and lose it. In the same manner, the word *have* means to *use* in c. xxv. 29. Thus we find by experience that zealous preachers, the more they preach, the more they abound in word and spirit; like fountains, from which however much water flows, just as much do they always receive.

*Therefore I speak unto them*, &c. Behold how Christ here plainly declares the reasons why He spoke to the Jews and Pharisees in parables. It was because they had been previously unwilling to hear, *i.e.*, to understand, obey, and believe Christ when He spake plainly of repentance and the way to the kingdom of Heaven. They deserved, therefore, that Christ should speak to them obscurely and by parables. For He taught at Capernaum—where were rich merchants, who trusted in their riches; where also were Scribes and Pharisees; these men despised, yea even derided and blasphemed, Christ's heavenly doctrine concerning contempt of riches, humility, poverty, and penance. Wherefore, Christ purposely betook Himself to parables, which (forasmuch as they did not understand them) they could not deride. Therefore He spake unto them in parables; not because they were absolutely reprobate, but because they were unworthy and ungrateful. Thus SS. Hilary, Chrysostom, and Bede. Nevertheless, I confess there were intermingled with this multitude of unbelieving Jews many who were desirous of hearing Christ for the sake of salvation; but because they were mixed up with the unbelieving, who were Christ's enemies, it was given to them to hear only in parables; that by them, even when they did not understand them, they might at least conceive admiration and

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reverence for Christ, which would at length lead them on to a better position. Yea, as S. Chrysostom says, to all the Scribes and Pharisees, unworthy and obstinate as they were, Christ spake in parables, with this intention and this end in view—that He might instil into them a sincere desire of searching and believing in Christ, and that having suffered a temporary obscurity in parables which they did not comprehend, they might the more eagerly desire Christ, the true light, and ask of Him the explanation of the parables. This is hinted at in Mark (iv. 33).

*And with many parables He spake the word unto them, as they were able to bear it*, that (namely) they who were able to understand and receive them, might receive them; but they who could not, might be stimulated to search out the meaning.

*For this people's heart is waxed gross*, &c. He cites Isaiah (vi. 9, 10), where instead of *make fat*, our translation has, *blind thou*—i.e., *thou shalt blind* (Chaldean, *infatuate*) *the heart of this people.* The Hebrew is השמן, *hashmen*, i.e., *make gross*, or *fat their heart*, and *make heavy their ears.* Where observe that this blinding, making gross and hardening, is spoken of God deserting and leaving in his blindness the man who is made blind and hardened; as well as of the man who, of his own free will, blinds, makes gross, and hardens himself, by cleaving to his darkness and his sins, and shutting his eyes to the Divine light and the doctrine of Christ. Where the LXX (which the Vulgate follows) reads with different points, *huschemman*, and translate with a clearer meaning—*the heart of this people has been made gross*, namely, directly by themselves, indirectly by God; especially because the preceding words signify, that they had not been so much blinded by God as by their own covetousness, pride, malice, hatred and envy against Christ. See what I have said on Isaiah vi., where I have expounded the passage at length.

*But blessed are your eyes, for they see* (Arabic, *see through*), &c. Eyes and ears of the mind as well as of the body. Blessed are ye, O ye Apostles, because ye receive the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, both with the exterior eyes and ears of the body, and the interior ears and eyes of the soul. With the eyes of the body ye



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behold My sacred actions and miracles: but, what is of far more consequence, with the eyes and ears of your minds, enlightened by God, ye believe and understand the same. This do not the Jews: for the soul, equally with the body, has its own eyes and ears—yea, the soul is all eye or ear.

*Verily, I say unto you, that many prophets*, &c. For, as Christ said (John viii. 56), "Abraham rejoiced to see My day; he saw it and was glad." Here is the voice and prayer of Jacob: "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord" (Gen. xlix. 18). Then also Isaiah xlv. 8: "Drop down dew, ye heavens from above, and let the clouds rain the righteous one. Let the earth open and bring forth the Saviour." (Vulg.) There was the same feeling and desire to all the patriarchs, all the prophets, all the saints of the Old Testament —namely, to see and hear Messiah, the Redeemer, Teacher, and Saviour of the world.

It is said that S. Augustine had three wishes: the first to see Christ speaking in the flesh; the second to behold Rome in the splendour of an imperial triumph; the third, to hear Paul thundering forth in his preaching. Many have the same wish at this present time.

*Hear ye therefore*, &c. *Cometh the evil one*, Gr. ὁ πονηρός, that is, *the devil*. S. Luke (viii. 12) gives this more clearly, *The seed is the Word of God. Those by the wayside are they that hear: then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.*

Appositely is the word of God, or the gospel, and the preaching of it compared to the sowing of seed. 1. Because as the word from the mouth of the preacher, so is seed scattered by the hand of the sower. 2. As the word is received by the ear and the heart of the hearer, so is seed received into the bosom of the earth, that it may produce fruit. 3. As seed is the parent and origin of all corn, so is the word of God the parent of all good works. 4. As the earth without seed produces only nettles, tares and thorns, so also does the mind of man without the word of God produce nothing but what is vain and noxious. 5. As seed, in order that it may fructify, must be sown in

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ground neither hard nor stony, dry or thorny, but in moist or good earth, so also the word of God ought to be received in tender, pure hearts, and inclined to piety, that it may bring forth spiritual fruit: this is what James says (i. 21), "receive with meekness the engrafted word."

Again, Palladius (*l.* 1 *de re Rust. Tit.* 35) suggests a remedy to prevent seeds being destroyed by moles, mice, ants, &c., that the seeds should be previously steeped in bitter substances. So also Pliny says that chick-peas keep caterpillars from herbs, and adds, "if the seed of herbs be steeped in the juice of wormwood, it will keep the herbs from all noxious animals." In like manner, in order that we may keep the seed of God's word in our hearts, untouched by the gnawing of pleasures, it must be macerated by sobriety, fasting, and other austerities, for these preserve the mind from the corruption of fleshly delights.

6. As the earth ought to be ploughed, manured, harrowed, that the seed may germinate, so also ought the heart of man to be cleared, and cultivated by laborious acts of penance, mortification and other virtues, that the word of God may produce fruit in it. This is what Isaiah says (xxxii. 20.) "Blessed are ye which sow beside all waters, sending forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass." See what is there said. 7. In order that seed may germinate, it requires the rain and the sun; so also that the word of God may strike root in the soul, it ought to be watered by grace, and warmed by heavenly love. This is what Isaiah says (lxi. 11), "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth: so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." This is effected by the word of the Gospel scattered by Christ and His Apostles. 8. As seed that is sown in the earth, must decay, burst and die, that it may be fruitful: so also that the word may fructify in the heart it must be, as it were, resolved, bruised, and die by meditation; and it must likewise bruise and mortify the heart itself, according to that saying of Christ (John xii. 24.) "Verily, verily, I say unto, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much



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fruit." Thus likewise must the faithful soul suffer many adversities before it can bring forth fruit unto God. 9. The seed must first strike root in the earth, then spring up in stalks and branches, next bud into flowers, and lastly, produce fruit from them; so also must the word of God first be rooted in the soul, then bring forth the germs of good thoughts, and the flowers of good desires, that it may at length produce the fruit of good works. 10. The entire power of a tree or plant is in the seed: for from it the plant and all its parts and members, which it possesses in an analogous manner to the limbs of men and animals, proceed. Wherefore many think that seeds have souls, as Aristotle hints (*l. 2. de gener. anim. c.* 1.) For when seed is cast into the earth, by and bye, as though it were living, it produces living germs. In like manner the whole force of virtue and perfection, whereby a man becomes spiritual, holy, and perfect, is contained in the word of God, as it were in seed. And this, unfolding itself and germinating in the mind produces all virtuous actions. 11. Different seeds produce different fruits; as the seed of a pear tree produces pears; the seed of wheat, wheat; the seed of barley produces barley, and so on. Thus different sentences of the Gospel bring forth different affections in the soul. The precepts of humility bring forth humility, the precepts of repentance, repentance. 12. As there is a father and a mother of every child, as for the production of fruit, there must be the earth and the seed; so in like manner, for good works there must be the concurrence of the word of God with that which is internal, *i.e.*, the free will of man, which must co-operate with the word of God. But this must be in such manner that the will must derive all its power of producing spiritual works from the word and grace of God, in order that they may be pleasing unto God, and may merit eternal life. (*Conc. Trident. sess.* 6.) In like manner the fruit derives liberty, or that it should be a free work and not compulsory nor done of necessity, from free will. For the interior word, which God speaks in the soul, stirring it up and strengthening it for acts of penance, charity, religion, &c., is nothing else but the grace of God itself, illuminating the understanding, and strengthening the affection, or the will, and inflaming it to the Divine works of virtue. This interior

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word, or grace, God is wont to add to the external word of preaching. What therefore the preacher speaks outwardly in the ear, God must speak inwardly in the heart if it is to bear fruit.

In fine, as from the better seed, and the more excellent land is produced better fruit, for example, better wheat, better barley, so in like manner from the more powerful preaching, and the grace of God, and the more fervent co-operation of free will are produced more excellent acts of virtue, and more heroic works. Hear what Pliny says (*l.* 24. 18.) He prescribes the following rules for sowing. 1. Let the sowing in moist places be performed quickly, the reason is that the seed may not putrefy with the wet: more slowly in dry ground, that the rain may follow, lest it should lie too long, and not be able to germinate. 2. It is part of the art of sowing to scatter the seed evenly. The hand ought to correspond with the step, and always with the right foot. 3. The seed must not be transferred from cold places to warm, not from ground where it ripens quickly to ground where it ripens late. 4. Sow abundantly in rich soil, more sparingly in poor soil. 5. This precept should be observed, do not exhaust your crops; for as Columella says, it is evident that crops will become exhausted by sowing the land too frequently with them. All these things are mystically adapted by preachers for sowing the Gospel.

*And understandeth it not*, does not perceive the meaning of the Word of God; because some other occupation, desire, or care, or the devil himself, distracts the mind to think of other things. *This is he who is sown by the wayside.* The heart of such a man is signified by that portion of the ground which is by the wayside, or the path itself. For as seed falling in the way, or by the side of the way, is rejected by the hard and trodden ground, and is snatched up by the birds; so, in like manner, the seed of the Word of God is not received into a heart which has become hardened by a habit of sin, but is immediately carried away by the devil impelling the heart to its accustomed sins. Such an one, therefore, cannot really be compared to *ground* at all, but to *a way;* he has the name and character, not of a hearer, but of a despiser of the Word of God.

Now the inaptitude for seed of land trodden down in a way may

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be removed, if it be cultivated by the plough and the mattock; and if a hedge be placed so as to exclude those who tread it down. Thus, likewise, the unfitness of a heart that is hardened by habits of vice may be taken away by compunction, which may cut and mollify the hardness of the heart: and if it be broken by the mattock of continence which weakens vicious desires, and brings them into subjection to right reason and the law of God.

*But hath no root in himself*, &c. This is the second condition of those who receive the Word. It is better than that condition of ground which preceded; for this is ground sufficiently soft for the seed to be received, and to sprout, though it is only for a short time. The meaning therefore is, The heart of that hearer who hears the Word of God, and with joy receives it in his mind, meditates upon it, and approves of it—according to those words of the Psalmist, "The statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart"—is like the seed sown on stony ground. This seed quickly springs up, that is, in pious affection for the faith, and other works of religion. But because there is only little earth in the heart, and much rock—that is, because there is more of a depraved habit in a heart that has become hardened by pleasures than of a disposition to piety—this seed of God's Word is unable to take deep root in such a heart. It is temporary, *i.e.*, it is not constant in the faith, but only believes for a little time, as the Arabic translates. It perceives the Word of God to be opposed to its lusts and vices; so that, like hard and rocky ground, it rejects it. Whence Luke says (viii. 14), *These are they who for a time believe, and in time of temptation fall away; i.e.*, from the Word and faith of God, or, certainly, from His law, which faith declares is to be followed. Wherefore, when tribulation arises from private persons, or public persecutions which tend to deprive them of life, or the riches and pleasures which they love; and when this is in consequence of the Word and faith of God, *immediately they are scandalized*, or as the Syriac translates, *they are offended*, and fall away, or apostatize from the profession of the faith. S. Gregory gives an example (*Hom.* 15 *in Evang.*): "The rocky ground had no moisture, because it did not bring what it had caused to sprout to

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the fruit of perseverance. For many persons, when they hear the Word against avarice, hate the same avarice, and praise contempt of all things; but by-and-bye, when the mind sees what it desires, it forgets what it praised. Many, when they hear the Word against luxury, not only do not desire to perpetrate fleshly pollutions, but are even ashamed of what they have perpetrated; but as soon s the fair appearance of the flesh is present to their eyes, the mind is carried away, and they are as though they had never made resolutions against those desires. For often we have compunction for our faults, and yet, after weeping, return to the same faults."

*But that which is sown among thorns*, &c. This is the third sort or condition of ground receiving seed, far better than the second condition, in as much as thorns offer less hindrance than rocks to seeds to germinate. This ground then denotes the heart of a hearer, which is beset with riches and worldly cares, as it were thorns. These destroy and choke the growing seed of the word of God, before it can bring forth the ripe fruit of virtue. Observe: riches are aptly compared to thorns, because like thorns they distract, prick, and torment the mind so that it is not pleasing to a rich man to think often of Divine things.

Hear S. Jerome: "To me it seems that the words spoken literally to Adam, Among thorns and thistles thou shalt eat thy bread, signify mystically, that whosoever shall give himself up to the pleasures and cares of this world, shall eat heavenly bread and the true food, among thorns."

And S. Gregory (*Hom.* 15. *in Evang.*): "Who would ever believe me if I wished to interpret thorns to mean riches, especially since the former prick, the latter give pleasure? And yet riches are thorns, because they lacerate the mind with the punctures of their thoughts, and when they draw to sin they inflict as it were a bloody wound."

*Care of the world, i.e.*, of things temporal, such as the care of a wife or family. Such things tear the mind, *i.e.*, distract, trouble, and wound it. But on the other hand the care of salvation and of things divine causes the mind to be collected, calm, sound and flourishing. Hear S. Gregory, The cares of the world choke, because they strangle

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the throat of the mind with importunate thoughts: and because they will not suffer good desires to enter the mind, they as it were cut off the breath of life. We must observe also that there are two things which Christ joins to riches, namely cares and pleasures: because in truth the mind is oppressed by care, and by abundance it becomes dissolute.

*Deceitfulness, i.e.* the seduction of riches. Riches are deceitful, because they draw away the mind from God and salvation, to vain and hurtful wealth, which is often a cause of many sins and of damnation, when it is acquired by all sorts of means. They are deceitful therefore, because they promise and perform not. They promise joy and pleasure, but instead they often hurry men into the eternal pains of hell.

Hear what S. Gregory says, "riches are deceitful because they cannot long abide with us, and because they do not drive out the poverty of our souls. Those only are the true riches which enrich us with virtues. If therefore, brethren beloved, ye desire to be rich, strive for the heavenly kingdom. If ye love the glory of dignities, hasten to be enrolled in the senate of the Angels, which is above."

*That which is sown in the good ground,* &c. "The good ground," says S. Thomas (*in Catena ex Remigio*): "The good ground is the faithful conscience of the elect, or the mind of the saints, which receives the Word of God with joy and desire and devotion of heart, and manfully keeps it in prosperity and adversity, and leads it on to the future, whence it follows, 'and brings forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirtyfold.'"

*Understandeth it,* &c.; *i.e.*, considers it in his mind, ruminates upon it, penetrates it, proves, tastes, retains it. The fruit is that both of good works as well as of their corresponding reward and glory in Heaven. Whence Luke adds, *with patience,* Gr. ἐν ὑπομονῇ, *i.e,* with long-suffering, after the manner of a husbandman patiently awaiting, after his sowing, the fruit and heavenly harvest of his labours and good works. "The good ground," says S. Gregory, "brings forth fruit through patience. The grapes are trodden by the heels of men, and flow into wine-juice; olives are expressed by

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beatings, and leave their lees, and produce the fatness of olive oil; by the threshing of the floor the grain is separated from the chaff, and when winnowed is carried into the granary, and so on." Hence S. Bonaventura says, that a good hearer of God's Word gives himself up entirely to it, together with all the faculties of his soul, namely, his understanding, his will, or affection, and his memory. He serves the Word of God with his understanding and will, because he receives it in an honest and good heart: with his memory, because he retains the word: with his powers of working and endurance, because he brings forth fruit with patience.

*And brings forth some an hundredfold*, &c. "We must observe," says S. Jerome, "that like as in the bad ground there were three different sorts—namely, by the wayside, the rocky, and the thorny places—so in the good ground there is a threefold diversity. And in the one as well as in the other, it is not the substance which is changed, but the will; and so it is the heart of the unbelieving as well as of the believing which receives the seed."

Moreover, the greatest fruit of God's Word, as it were the greatest fruit of seed is a hundredfold, as if from a single grain a harvest of a hundred grains were gathered, as was Isaac's case (Gen. xxvi. 12). The medium fruit is called sixtyfold; the lowest thirtyfold. A definite number is put for an indefinite; otherwise He might have added, *brings forth some fortyfold, some twentyfold*, and so on. Whence, in opposition to Jovinian and Calvin, the inequality of merit, and consequently of the reward, of good works in Heaven is rightly proved. So S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 45), S. Augustine (*de S. Virgin. c.* 46), Nazianzen (*Orat.* 28), and others. For the Fathers, however Calvin may deride and exclaim, apply these words especially to diverse states. 1. S. Jerome, on this passage (*lib.* 1, *contra Jovin*), and S. Athanasius (*Epist. ad Ammon.*), and others assign the hundredfold fruit to virgins; the sixtyfold to widows; the thirtyfold to those who live in honest and holy wedlock.

2. S. Cyprian (*l. de Hab. Virg.*) and S. Augustine (*l.* 1, *de quest. Evang. quest.* 9, *tom* 4) assign the hundredfold to martyrs, the sixty to virgins, the thirtyfold to those who are married. Hear what S.

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Augustine says: "I assert that the hundredfold belongs to martyrs, on account of their holiness of life, or contempt of death; the sixty-fold to virgins, on account of interior quiet, because they do not need to fight against fleshly habits—for rest is wont to be granted to soldiers who are past sixty years of age; the thirtyfold to the married, because thirty is the age of warriors—for those have a sharper conflict, that they may not be overcome of lust."

3. Euthymius and Theophylact assign the thirtyfold to beginners, the sixty to those who have made some progress, the hundredfold to the perfect. So also Nazianzen (*Orat.* 28.) When a man proceeds, saith he, from thirty to sixty, he finishes with a hundred, as Isaac did (Gen. xxvi.) And he sings the Psalms of Degrees, going from strength to strength, and placing the Ascensions in his heart (Ps. 84.)

*Another parable put He forth*, &c. The Syriac adds, *enigmatically*. This means, it is done in the kingdom of Heaven in the same way that it is done in a field—when a man sows his seed, and his enemy sows tares over it. Wherefore Mark has (iv. 26.) *So is the kingdom of God, as if a man cast seed into the earth, and while men slept*, &c. For the whole parable is compared with the whole of the things signified, not part with part: for otherwise the sower would not be like to a kingdom but to a king, the King of Heaven.

*Whilst men slept*, &c. That is to say by night, whilst men were sleeping, his enemy came unknown to everyone. He was envious of the prosperous crops of his rival, and in order to ruin them, he sowed tares among them. The expression, *whilst men slept*, adds to the elegance of the parable: for those who are envious are accustomed to frame such plots against those who sleep.

*Symbolically*, S. Jerome and S. Augustine understand this sleeping to mean negligence and carelessness on the part of bishops and pastors of the Church. Or they understand it of the death of the Apostles, on which the heretics took occasion to sow the tares of their heresies and wickednesses. Hence let pastors learn to watch over their flocks. "The life of mortals is a watch." For as Augustine says, "To sleep more than to watch is the life of dormice rather than of men."

*Tares*, the Hebrew Gospel reads, חרולים *charulim*, i.e., *nettles*,

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*thistles*. The word in Greek is *zizania*, a word peculiar to the Gospels, unknown to Cicero and Demosthenes, and signifying every kind of worthless and noxious weed. All impurity in seed is called *zizania*, as S. Augustine says. Tertullian (*de prescript. hæret. c.* 31.) interprets *zizania*, to mean *wild oats*. "In the parable," he says, "The Lord first sowed his good seed, and it was afterwards that the devil sowed the spurious seed of his barren crop." Whence he gathers that the fact of heresy being later in time is a mark of falsehood. Hence too (*l. de anima c.* 16.) he calls the sower of tares "the nocturnal interpolator of evil seed."

*Zizania* then, or *tares* are whatsoever is injurious to the crops, or inimical to wheat, as *darnel*, for instance. Hear Pliny (*l.* 18. *c.* 17.) "I should reckon darnel and thistles and thorns and burrs, no less than brambles, among the diseases of the crops rather than among the pests of the ground." Some are of opinion that *zizania* is a Syriac word. Other derive it from the Chaldee *zyz*, an *appearance, a figure*. For it has the appearance of nourishing corn, but is not. The Germans call *zizania, droncacert*, because it makes people drunk: it also gives vertigo and stupefaction to those who eat it. Hence zizania signifies mystically heretics and sinners, especially those who corrupt others by word or example, as SS. Augustine, Chrysostom, and Gregory teach. For zizania injure the wheat, and choke and kill it, because they draw away nourishment from it, and so as it were corrupt and strangle the wheat. This is Christ's second parable of the tares, by which He tacitly rebukes the Scribes and Pharisees, His adversaries, who sowed the tares of their false accusations over the seed of the Word of God, *i.e.*, His preaching of the Gospel, by saying that Jesus was opposed to Moses, that He had a familiar spirit, and so on; by which they inferred that Jesus was not the Messiah, but a magician and an impostor. By this means they turned away the people from Him and His Gospel, and choked and destroyed the good seeds and desires of faith and piety which Christ had scattered in their hearts. Therefore they were tares, *i.e.*, the evil seed of the devil.

*When the blade was sprung up*, &c. For the first sprouts

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of zizania and of wheat are alike, so that one cannot be discerned from the other; but when they are grown up, they are easily distinguished.

*Servants of the householder*, &c. *Lest ye root up the wheat also with them.* For the tares are intertwined and interwoven among the roots of the wheat, so that if you were to pull up the former, you must root up the latter also. This parable Christ will expound, verse 31.

*The kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed*, &c. Instead of *the birds of the heaven lodge in the branches of it* the Arabic has *they are overshadowed by its branches.* This is Christ's third parable, the occasion and cause of which S. Chrysostom gives as follows: "Because the Lord had said that of the seed three parts perish, and one is preserved, and again of that which is preserved, there is great loss on account of the tares which are sown above it, lest people should say, who then and how many will believe? he removes this fear by the parable of the grain of mustard seed, and therefore it is said, *Another parable put He forth unto them, the kingdom of Heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed*, &c."

You will enquire in the first place, what it is which is here compared to the kingdom of Heaven, and likened to a grain of mustard seed? 1. S. Hilary understands it of Christ Himself. He says, "The Lord compares Himself to a grain of mustard seed, which is very sharp and the least of all seeds, and whose virtue and power are increased by bruising and pressure. After this grain had been sown in the field, when it was taken by the people and delivered to death, as though in a field by a sort of sowing, there was the burial of its body, it grew above the measure of all herbs, and exceeded the glory of all the prophets. For like a herb the preaching of the prophets was given to Israel as being sick: but now in the branches of the tree, raised from the ground on high, the birds of the air dwell: by these we understand the Apostles, lifted up by the power of Christ, and they overshadow the world with their branches. To them the Gentiles flew for the hope of life; and when they are vexed with whirlwinds, that is by the blasts of the devil,

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they rest as in the branches of a tree." In like manner S. Gregory (*lib.* 19. *Moral. c.* 11.) expounds this whole parable, "Christ Himself is the grain of mustard seed, who was planted in the sepulchre of the garden, and rose again a mighty tree. He was but a grain when He died; a tree when He rose again. A grain through lowliness of the flesh; a tree by the power of His majesty. A grain, because we saw Him, and there was no comeliness; but a tree because He was fairer than the children of men. The branches of this tree are sacred preachers. And let us see how widely they are spread. For what is spoken concerning them? Their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world. The birds rest in their branches, because holy souls who lift up themselves from earthly thoughts by the wings, as it were, of virtues are refreshed after the fatigue of this life by their words and their consolations." You will say, how can Christ be called the kingdom of Heaven, when He is not the kingdom, but its King? It is replied: as a king is as it were the head in a kingdom, so a kingdom is as the body of a king. Wherefore a king represents the whole state or kingdom. Hence according to the rule of Ticonius, often in Scripture what belongs to the Church, which is the kingdom of Christ, is attributed to Christ, and *vice versa.*

2. More plainly and aptly, the kingdom of Heaven and the grain of mustard seed are the Church, especially the Primitive Church.

You will enquire, (2). Why the Gospel is compared to a grain of mustard seed, and what are the resemblances between the two things? I answer, the first is that Christ by this parable intends to signify the immense power and fruitfulness of Evangelical preaching, insomuch that what had a very small beginning with Christ, and by a few Apostles, diffused itself over the whole world. For a grain of mustard seed is *less than all seeds, i.e.*, the least of all seeds; as the Syriac and Arabic have it. The Greek is μικρότερον πάντων σπερμάτων, *i.e., less than all seeds*, meaning *very little.* This must be understood according to the common usage of speech, by which we call what is very little, or one of very small things, *the least;* for otherwise to speak precisely, poppy seed, and the seed of rue, and of some other

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herbs, is less than mustard seed. Thus the preaching of the Gospel by Christ and the Apostles was at first very circumscribed.

2. A grain of mustard seed, especially in Syria, grows into a tree, so that *birds dwell*—Syriac, *build their nests*—in its branches. Thus the Gospel grew, and filled the whole world, so that the birds of Heaven, *i.e.*, men lofty in knowledge and understanding as well as kings and princes dwelt in its branches. (See Dan. iv., 9 and 19). Some understand by *the birds*, the angels, because they have wings, and are very swift. Hear S. Augustine (*Serm.* 33 *de Sanc.*). "Peter is a branch; Paul is a branch; blessed Laurence, whose festal day we are celebrating, is a branch. All the Apostles and martyrs of the Saviour are branches; and if anyone will bravely lay hold of them, they will escape being drowned in the waves of the world. He who dwells under their shadow shall not feel the fire of hell, and shall be secure from the storm of the tempest of the devil, and from being burnt up in the day of judgment."

3. And chiefly by mustard is denoted the igneous force and efficacy of the Gospel. "Pythagoras," says Pliny (*l.* 20, *c.* 22), "considered that mustard holds the chief place amongst those things whose force is borne upward; since there is nothing which more thoroughly penetrates the nose and the brain." A grain of mustard refers to the fervour of faith, says S. Augustine.

4. Mustard seed must be bruised; for when it is bruised it emits its igneous force and flavour. Thus the preaching of the Gospel was as it were, bruised by a thousand oppressions and persecutions, which the Apostles suffered; and then it breathed forth its igneous force and strength.

5. Mustard seed, as Pliny says, is sharp and biting. It draws tears, purges away phlegm and cerebral secretions; it is masticated for toothache; when bruised and mixed with vinegar it is applied to the stings of scorpions and the bites of snakes; it is an antidote to the poison of fungi; it is beneficial for the breast and lungs; it is useful against epilepsy, dropsy, asthma, lethargy, and many other diseases. Thus the Gospel expels poisons, that is sins, by the emetic of confession; it is sharp and biting, because it teaches penance and

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the cross; it excites the tears of compunction; it is medicine for all the faculties of the soul, and especially it dries up concupiscence, and animates to virtue. "The bitterness of its words is the medicine of souls," says S. Augustine.

6. Mustard seed by its sharpness seasons food, and renders it palatable. So also the Gospel renders palatable everything which is hard and difficult by means of the example of Christ, and by the hope of future glory which it promises.

S. Augustine says, "A grain of mustard seed is great, not in appearance, but in virtue. At first appearance it seems small, worthless, despised, not possessing savour, nor odour, nor sweetness; but when it is bruised, it sheds abroad its odour and exhales nourishment of a fiery taste. It is so inflamed with the fervour of heat that there might be enclosed in it so much fire, by which men could (especially in the winter-time) drive away cold, and warm themselves inwardly." After this he applies the qualities of mustard to the Gospel and the Christian faith, thus: "Thus too the Christian faith, at first sight, appears small and worthless, not manifesting its power, not carrying any semblance of pride, neither furnishing grace. But as soon as it begins to be bruised by divers temptations, immediately it manifests its vigour, it indicates its sharpness, it breathes the warmth of belief in the Lord, and is possessed with so great ardour of divine fire, that both itself is hot and it compels those who participate to be fervent also. As the two disciples said in the Gospel, when the Lord spoke with them after His Passion, "Did not our hearts burn within us by the way, while the Lord Jesus opened to us the Scriptures?" A grain of mustard, then, warms the inward members of our body, but the power of faith burns up the sins of our heart. The one indeed takes away piercing cold; the other expels the devil's frost of transgressions. A grain of mustard, I say, purges away corporeal humours, but faith puts an end to the flux of lusts. By the one, medicine is gained for the head; but by faith our spiritual Head, Christ the Lord, is often refreshed. Moreover, we enjoy the sacred odour of faith, according to the analogy of mustard seed, as the blessed Apostle saith, "We are a sweet savour of Christ unto God."

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*Tropologically;* All these things may be applied to a faithful soul, and especially to an Apostle, and to a suffering Christian, or to a martyr. Wherefore the Church adapts this parable to S. Laurence, as the Gospel for his festival. As S. Augustine says, in the work already cited, "We may compare the holy martyr Laurence to a grain of mustard seed; for he, being bruised by various sufferings, deserved to become fragrant throughout the whole world by the grace of his martyrdom. He, when he was in the body, was humble, unknown, and held in low estimation; but after he had been bruised, torn, and burnt he diffused the odour of his nobleness in the churches in all the world. Rightly, therefore, is the comparison applied to him. For Laurence, when he suffers, is inflamed. The fervour of its attrition moves the one; Laurence breathes forth fire in his manifold tribulations. Mustard, I say, is cooked in a small vessel; Laurence is roasted on the gridiron by the fiery flame. Blessed Laurence the martyr was burnt outwardly by the flames of the raging tyrant, but he was inflamed inwardly by the far greater fire of the love of Christ." The Arabians have a proverb—"A grain of pepper is more powerful than many large gourds;" because if it be bruised it emits a fiery force, and makes itself felt in everyone's nostrils. You may say the same of a grain of mustard. A believer, therefore, should be a grain of pepper or mustard, and breathe everywhere, and upon all, a divine fire, and so pepper all men, and make them like himself, zealous that is, and ardent in the love of God.

*Another parable,* &c. This is Christ's fourth parable, of leaven, by which (as by the former parable) He shows the power and efficacy of the preaching of the Gospel. As S. Chrysostom says, "Like as leaven communicates its own virtue to a great quantity of meal, so shall ye, O ye Apostles, transform the whole world." S. Chrysostom observes, with regard to the word *hid:* "Thus also ye, when ye shall be subjected to your persecutors, shall overcome them. And as leaven indeed is buried but not destroyed, but by degrees transforms everything to its own state; so shall it happen with your preaching. Do not ye, therefore, fear, because I said, Many troubles shall happen

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unto you; for by this means shall ye shine, and shall overcome all." You will ask why Christ compares the Gospel to leaven? I reply; because leaven is a portion of the meal that has become a little sour, which takes place through fermentation. Hear how Pliny describes the manner in which leaven is made (*l.* 18, *c.* 11): "Now" (because formerly it was made in another way, as he had related a little before) "leaven is made of the meal itself, which is first kneaded before salt is added, after the manner of pottage, and left until it becomes a little sour. Commonly, indeed, they do not warm it, but only make use of what has been kept from the day before. And evidently it is the nature of heat to cause fermentation; as of bodies that are nourished with fermented bread to become stronger. Thus it was, that among our ancestors the greatest healthiness was attributed to the heaviest wheat."

Again, leaven, although it be small in bulk, with its heat moistens the whole mass of dough; and as it were effects a change in its entire substance. It makes it palatable and digestible, so that it becomes wholesome bread for nourishing, sustaining and strengthening man. In like manner the Gospel by means of a few Apostles, who suffered many tribulations, converts the whole world to itself and makes the heart of each to be warmed with the love of God. The woman who kneads is the Church, or the power and wisdom of God, says S. Augustine.

*Tropologically*: S. Augustine says, "Christ calls love leaven, because it excites to warmth. The woman he calls wisdom. By the three measures of meal we may understand either these three things in man—the whole heart, the whole soul, and the whole mind; or the three degrees of fruit-bearing, an hundred, sixty, and thirty fold; or the three sorts of men, represented by Noah, Daniel and Job." (*l.* 1. *q. q. Evang. q.* 12.) Rabanus adds, "He says until the whole was leavened: because charity being hid in our minds ought to grow there until it transmutes the whole mind into its own perfection: that which is begun here, is perfected hereafter."

S. Ambrose says, that like as leaven is disseminated through the whole mass of the meal, being as it were broken up; "so Christ was



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broken, torn and disolved by His various sufferings: and His moisture, that is His precious Blood was poured out for our salvation, that it might by mingling itself with the whole human race, consolidate that race, which lay scattered abroad." See also S. Chrysostom, who says among other things, "If twelve men leavened nearly all the meal of the world, consider diligently in your minds, how great must be our wickedness and sloth, who, although we are so many, are not able to convert the remnant of the Gentiles, when we ought to be sufficient for a thousand worlds." S. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, was wont to weep over the same thing. His was the saying, "That formerly priests of gold celebrated in chalices of wood, but now wooden priests celebrate in golden chalices."

*Three measures*: *a measure* was equal in quality to a *bath* which is a liquid measure, containing an Italian bushel, or as S. Jerome and Josephus say, a bushel and a half. The *measure* contained three Attic bushels.

These three measures are the quarters of the world, Asia, Africa, Europe. These were designated by the three sons of Noah. For the posterity of Shem inhabited Asia; the posterity of Ham, Africa; and of Japhet, Europe. So Cæsarius, brother of S. Gregory Nazianzen. (*Dial.* 4.)

*Symbolically;* S. Hilary says, the grace of the Gospel was hid in the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets; now it hath appeared in the faith, hope and love of the Holy Trinity, that what the Law constituted, and the Prophets announced, the same might be fulfilled by the advent of the Gospels. Or as others say, that it might be confirmed by the threefold work of God, viz. of creation, redemption and glorification.

*Allegorically*: S. Bernard, (*l.* 5. *de Consider.*) says the Blessed Virgin joined and united in her womb the three natures of Christ, namely soul, body and divinity to the one Hypostasis of the *Word.*

*All these things spake Jesus in parables,* meaning in a parabolical manner: *things kept secret,* Heb. חידות *chidoth, i. e. enigmas,* as the Chaldee trans. and S. Jerome (Ps. lxxviii. 2.). The Arabic has, *I will speak things hidden before the foundation of the world.* Christ cites the psalm of David, lxxviii. 2, who, according to the letter,

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through the whole psalm, celebrates God's benefits to the Synagogue, *i.e.*, the people of Israel, *from the beginning*, *i. e.* from their going forth out of Egypt under Moses their leader, until David's own time, in order that he might stir up the people to be grateful to God, and to love and worship Him. But mystically, says S. Jerome, David was there a type of Christ, who celebrates the benefits granted by God through Himself to His Church, and before-time hid. These things were concerning the promised land in heaven, mysteries declared by parables. Observe that the Hebrew word for *parables* is *mashal*, which signifies any weighty and famous saying, such a one as predominates over others. For *mashal* means to rule: thus it came to signify what was obscure and recondite, whether it were an enigma, an allegory, a parable, or a sentence properly so called. Therefore the sentences in that seventy-eighth Psalm are not properly parables, but only weighty sentences. But here there are like weighty sentences and parables properly so called. Thus this verse of the Psalm applies to Christ in both its meanings, but to David in only one of them. For in Scripture many things are spoken which are more suitable to the things signified by the allegory, than to the allegory itself and its literal meaning.

*When the multitudes were sent away*, &c., . . . *declare unto us the parable of the tares.* For this seemed more obscure than the others, and to contain severer threats.

*The field is the world*, &c. The field is the *world*, not the Church; for by the tares of this field many understand heretics, who are not in the Church, especially when they are public and manifest.

*Children of the kingdom:* These are faithful, righteous, and persevering in justice, and therefore elected by God to be heirs of the kingdom of Heaven. Whence, in verse 43, they are called *the righteous.* These are the sons of the Heavenly Father, "which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 13).

Observe: the *righteous* are here called *seed*, because although the seed which Christ sows is the Word of God, spoken as well outwardly by the lips, as inwardly in the heart by grace; nevertheless, because



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the fruit of this seed is the conversion of the faithful, and their justification, therefore the righteous also are called seed, *i.e.*, the fruit of the seed, and the harvest.

*But the tares*, &c. Gr. *υἱοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ, i.e., the sons of that wicked*, namely *the devil:* thus the Syriac and Arabic. Therefore they themselves are evil, for the offspring follow their father. As the sons of God are good and divine, so are the sons of the devil wicked and diabolical.

Observe: by tares and children of the wicked one, some understand heretics, because they are the most injurious kind of tares, inasmuch as they choke and destroy the faithful and faith from their foundation. So S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and S. Augustine (*l. quæst. in Matth. q.* 11) who, however, retracts (*l.* 2 *Retract. c.*. 27) and teaches from S. Cyprian, that tares denote all the wicked in the Church. SS. Gregory, Ambrose, and Theophylact teach the same. For all wicked persons, by their evil life, hurt the faithful and the Church, as tares injure wheat, and choke it. Falsely then from this passage (*verse* 29), where Christ forbids these tares to be plucked up, and subjoins, *Let both grow together*, the Innovators infer that heretics are not to be punished and extirpated. For by parity of reasoning they might conclude that murderers and thieves must not be punished; for they too are tares. And I say that Christ does not here absolutely forbid these tares to be plucked up, but says that no one must attempt to root them all up together; nor at a time when they cannot be distinguished from the wheat; or when there is danger of pulling up the wheat at the same time with them. But all this does not apply when anyone is a manifest heretic, especially if he teaches and infects others with his heresy. For such a one does more harm to the Church than a murderer, for the one only kills the body, but the other the soul. See 1 Cor. v. 13, Gal. v. 12, where the Apostle commands impious persons, especially false teachers, to be taken away and extirpated. Thus Origen and S. Augustine—the latter indeed was at first of opinion that heretics ought not to be put to death, yea, that they ought not even to be compelled to resume the faith which they have professed in baptism. But afterwards, when he

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had been taught by experience how perverse and obstinate heretics are, he changed his opinion and taught the contrary. He says, "I had not yet learnt either what great wickedness they would venture upon, if they could do it with impunity; or how much careful discipline could effect to make a change in them for the better." (*l.* 2, *cont. Parmen. c.* 2, *and* 2 *Retract. c.* 5).

*The harvest*, &c. For then shall God by the angels reap the harvest of all men, bad as well as good; and shall sever them in the day of judgment, gathering the good into the heavenly barn, and delivering the evil to the fire of hell. Whence it follows that separation shall be effected by the ministry of the angels. Therefore it is said below, that the Son of Man shall come to judgment with the angels.

*And shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend;* Gr. *scandals, stumbling-blocks.* The wicked, whom Christ previously called *tares*, and *children of the devil*, He here calls *scandals;* because they are, by their wickednesses, a cause of offence and ruin both to themselves and others. S. Chrysostom observes, that the twofold punishment of the wicked is here signified—the *pain of loss* (in that it is said, *they shall collect out of His kingdom*), because they shall be shut out of Heaven; and *of sense*, in that it is said, *and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.* S. Chrysostom adds: "See the unspeakable love of God to man! He is prompt to bless them, slow to punish. When He soweth, He soweth by Himself; but when He punishes, He punishes by others: for this latter work He sends His angels." Christ adds, in verse 30, *bind them together in bundles*, which S. Gregory explains thus: "The angel-reapers bind the tares in bundles for burning, when they join like with like in similar torments—as the proud with the proud, the luxurious with the luxurious, liars with liars, unbelievers with unbelievers—that they may burn together."

*And shall cast them*, &c. *The furnace* denotes that the damned shall be confined in hell as in a furnace, as wood and straw are confined in a furnace.

*Then shall the righteous*, &c. *Then*, because now, says Remigius,

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the just shine for an example to others; but then they shall shine as the sun for the praise of God. He alludes to Daniel xii. 3: "They that are learned (Heb. *mascilim*, i.e., *wise* and *prudent*—such, namely, as shall live wisely and prudently) shall shine as the splendour of the firmament; and they that shall instruct many to justice, as the stars for everlasting eternities." See what I have there said. From this passage some heretics were of opinion, that in the resurrection our bodies will be transformed into globes, so as to be like the solar orb. The emperor Justinian ascribes this heresy to Origen, and condemns it. (See Baronius, *tom.* 7, *A. C.* 538, *pp.* 289 *and* 293.)

*The kingdom of Heaven is like*, &c. For he who knows that a treasure is lying hid in any place, and buys the place, becomes the master of the treasure, and is not bound to point it out to the former owner, but may use his knowledge for his own advantage by buying the field for as much as it is worth by common estimation; with which the hid treasure has nothing to do.

*Which when a man has found.* The Greek has the Aorist, εὑρών.

Observe: Christ, in the preceding four parables (namely, of the Sower, of the Seed, of the Grain of Mustard, and of Leaven) has declared the nature, power, and efficacy of the Gospel; now, in the two following parables, of the Treasure, and of the Pearl, He declares its price, how great it is, that all things are deservedly counted as loss in comparison of it. So SS. Chrysostom, Hilary, and others. In a similar way, Wisdom is spoken of by Solomon in the Proverbs (viii. 11, 19): "For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it . . . . . My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver."

*Literally.* By this treasure S. Jerome understands Christ Himself; and S. Augustine, Holy Scripture. (*Quest. in Matt. q.* 13). "For when anyone has attained partly to the understanding of it, he feels great mysteries lie hid in it, and he sells all he has, and buys it; that is, by despising things temporal, he procures rest for himself, that he may be rich in the knowledge of God."

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*Tropologically.* S. Gregory, by the treasure, understands heavenly desire. He says: "The treasure being found is hid that it may be preserved, because it is not enough for a man to guard the zeal of his heavenly desire from the wicked spirits, who does not hide the same from the praise of men. In this present life we are, as it were, in a road, by which we are going to our country. Wicked spirits, like robbers, beset our path. He, therefore, who openly carries his treasure in the way desires to be robbed of it."

*Again the kingdom of Heaven*, &c.—*goodly;* Syriac, *the best;* Arabic, *a good gem.* He means the faithful ought with as great zeal to provide themselves with the doctrine and life of the Gospel (which is the way and the price of the kingdom of Heaven) as a merchant seeks for pearls, and buys the one of them which is most precious: for otherwise the kingdom, or the Gospel itself, is properly compared to a pearl rather than to a merchant man.

*And when he had found*, &c. For as this pearl was beyond all price, so is the Gospel. See Pliny on the price of pearls (*l.* 9, 35), where he says, among other things, that pearls have greater affinity with the sky than with the sea. See what I have said on the Apocalypse xxi. 21, where I have enumerated thirteen properties of pearls.

*Symbolically.* The precious pearl is Christ, also the Blessed Virgin, also the religious state, also charity: "for charity is a precious pearl, without which nothing can profit thee, whatsoever thou mayst have," says S. Augustine. For charity is the necklace of Christ. Also a precious pearl is the contemplative life, concerning which Christ said of the Magdalene, "Mary hath chosen the good part." A pearl is, also, the soul of every man. It is also eternal felicity, as our Salmeron appositely shows (*tom.* vii. *tract.* 11); for all these are principal parts of the kingdom of Heaven, *i.e.*, of the doctrine of the Gospel. Such, likewise, is humility, even as our Thomas teaches, being taught of God himself (*Imitat. Christi. l.* 1, *c.* 2): "If thou wishest profitably to know and to learn anything, love to be unknown, and to be counted as nothing. This is the loftiest and most useful knowledge—truly to know and despise thyself." This is the most precious Gospel pearl, but its worth is

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unknown to the proud children of Adam. Such also is the Cross of Christ, and to suffer for Christ. See Hab. chap. iii. 4: "There were horns in His hands; there was His strength hid." (*Vulg.*)

The chief and most precious pearl of all, from which all virtues and all the Saints, like pearls are sprung, and from which they derive their beauty and their value, is Christ Himself. For His Deity in His Humanity is as a pearl hid in a shell. It issued forth of the substance of the Virgin, and the dew of the Spirit, most white, through innocence of life. It was exceeding bright through wisdom; round through the possession of all perfection; having the weight of conscience, the smoothness of meekness, the price of blessedness. For says Pliny, "The value of pearls consists in whiteness, size, rotundity, smoothness and weight." Hear what S. Augustine says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God: for the Word of the Lord shines with the brightness of truth, and is solid with the firmness of eternity, and is every where alike with the beauty of Divinity: when the shell of the flesh is pierced through, God may be perceived." This pearl of Christ says our Salmeron, is small by humility, but precious in value; Let us bear it on the head of our mind by way of ornament; on our forehead by confessing the faith; in our ears by obedience to the Law, obedience rendered to God in Himself, and our Superiors; on our necks and breasts by love; on our arms by the exercise of good works; in rings in our hands by the gift of discerning spirits; in our girdles by chastity; on our garments by modesty and holy devotion to eternal life; but we ourselves also may become precious pearls, and by this means may induce others to imitate the most holy life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally Christ is not only a very precious pearl, but He is also the gem of gems. He is a carbuncle, because He is the light of the world. He is an emerald because He delights the angels by the verdure of His grace. He is strong and invincible as a diamond. He produces joy as a sardius. He heals the leprosy of sin as a chrysoprasus. He assists the bringing forth of good works as a spiritual jasper; He sharpens the intellect as a beryl; He has celestial colour and life, as a sapphire; He resists sleep and drunken-

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ness, as an amethyst; and all the infirmities of the mind, as a hyacinth; He sustained the worry of the passions, as a topaz: He is a sardonyx in brightness and splendour; He is a chrysolite in His golden charity. Whence the foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem are laid with these twelve precious stones, which signify the twelve Apostles of Christ.

*Again the kingdom of Heaven is like to a drag-net*, &c. The two preceding parables, those viz. of the Treasure and the Pearl denoted the value and dignity of the Gospel. This parable shows its capaciousness, viz. that it embraces all nations and people of the world, bad as well as good. Christ propounded the parable with this object, that the Apostles and Saints should not wonder, if among the faithful they beheld some living wickedly, just as in a great kingdom no one is surprised that murderers, thieves and adulterers are found. Again it was spoken in order that no one should flatter himself, simply on account of being a believing Christian, since there are in the Church many who are wicked; but that he should give diligence to be just and holy in the Church.

*A drag-net:* Gr. σαγήνη, signifying the kind of net commonly called *a drag* or *trawling-net*, because of its sweeping the water or the sea in order to catch the fishes. Properly this *sagene* or *drag-net* is the bosom of the net. In like manner all the faithful are, as it were, received into the maternal bosom of the Church, and there are cherished, nourished and preserved.

*Of every kind*: for thus the Gospel is preached to all nations, and of them the Church is formed. The fishes are believers, the fishermen are the Apostles, and the drag-net is the Church and the Gospel.

*Which, when it was full*, &c., *cast the bad away.* They cast them into the sea, or upon the shore. The Arabic is, *They collected the select fish in their vessels.* The vessels denote the various mansions in the house of our Father, as Christ says, (John. xiv.), or the various abodes of Heaven, which, in another place are called *the eternal tabernacles. The bad*, Gr. σαπρὰ, *i.e., putrid, decaying, noisome.* From this passage S. Augustine rightly proves against the Donatists that in the Church there are not only good people, or as Calvin says, the elect, but bad and reprobate people.

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*So shall it be in the end of the world*, &c. Arabic, *in the end of this time*, that is to say, in the day of judgment.

*He saith unto them, therefore every Scribe*, &c. It is as though He said, Forasmuch as ye, O ye Apostles, have understood by these My parables, how great a treasure the kingdom of Heaven is, ye ought to draw forth all things from this treasury, that ye may communicate them to others; yea, to the whole world. Again: because ye have understood my method of teaching the things of Heaven, and things which are new to men, by means of parables borrowed from things in common use; ye too ought to teach and preach the same things in the same manner, that from the old things, which they do understand, they may receive and learn those new things which ye preach.

*A Scribe;* Arabic, *a Scribe, who teaches for the kingdom of Heaven*, *i.e.*, an Evangelical doctor well instructed to announce the Gospel, and lead believers to the kingdom of Heaven; such as ye are, and shall be, O ye Apostles, who are fully taught by Me and the Holy Spirit. He opposes His own Scribes, *i.e.*, Doctors and Preachers, His Apostles in fact, to the Scribes of the Jews, which last only preached the law of Moses, and the earthly advantages flowing from it.

*Things new and old.* This is a proverb, signifying every kind of food, substance, or goods necessary or useful for sustaining a family. Some of these things are best when new, others when old. Hence the proverb, "New honey, old wine"; *i.e.*, honey is best when fresh, but the oldest wine is the best. Hence too the verse in Pindar's ninth Olympic Hymn, "Praise old wine, but the flowers of new Hymns." The meaning is—As the father of a family provides for his household things new and old, *i.e.*, everything necessary and useful, so ought a Gospel teacher to bring forth, at suitable times, according to the capacity of his hearers, various discourses, knowledge of every kind; and especially to take care to teach them the new and unknown mysteries of the Gospel, by means of old examples, such as parables and similitudes, which his hearers can take in. Moreover, some of the ancients, as SS. Chrysostom, Augustine, Jerome, Hilary, and Bede apply *old and new* to the Old and New Testaments. For that is the best preaching when the New Testa-

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ment is confirmed and illustrated from the Old, and proved to be in all points typically agreeable to it. For the Old Testament was the type of the New; the New Testament is the antitype of the Old.

Abul. objects that when Christ said this, the New Testament was not written. I reply that it was already spoken and taught by Christ, and was shortly about to be written by the four Evangelists; and that Christ knew this. Wherefore He bids the Apostles that they should preach themselves what they had heard, but that their successors should preach the same things as written by the Evangelists.

*Jesus passed on from thence, i.e.*, from His house which He had at Capernaum.

*And came unto his own country*, &c. This country was not Bethlehem where He was born, but Nazareth, where he was brought up.

*Is not this the son of the carpenter*, &c. The Gr. is, *the son of the workman*, the Arab. adds, *in wood*. S. Mark (vi. 3.) *Is not this the workman?* "Nor is it to be wondered at," says S. Augustine, "since both might be said, for they believed Him to be a workman, in that he was the son of a workman." This was because they were accustomed to see Him working with Joseph. It seems therefore that Christ wrought with His father Joseph until He was thirty years of age, when He began to teach and to preach. SS. Hilary and Ambrose think that Christ was a blacksmith; Hugo, a mason, or a goldsmith. The general opinion is that Christ was a carpenter, as S. Thomas, teaches out of S. Chrysostom. S. Justin (*Dial. c. Tryph.*) says, "He was accustomed to make ploughs and yokes for oxen." Hence Christ in His preaching often takes His similitudes from those objects, as, "Take my yoke upon you," and, "'No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Hence too when a Christian was asked in derision by Julian the Apostate, "what the Son of the Carpenter was doing;" answered wittily, "He is making a bier for Julian." This was shortly before Julian was slain, (*See Sozomen. l.* 6. *c.* 2.) Some however say that Christ did not exercise a workman's craft. But I have said more on this subject on S. Luke ii. 51.

*Mystically:* "God is the workman who is the Father of Christ,

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who framed the works of the whole world, who built the ark of Noah, who set in order the Tabernacle of Moses, who instituted the ark of the Covenant. You might call Him a carpenter, who planes down a rigid mind, and cuts away proud thoughts." (*Serm. de Nat.*) Moreover, says S. Chrysologus (*Serm.* 48.) "Christ was the son of a workman; but of Him, who made the frame of the universe, not by a hammer, but by His command; who disposed the composition of the elements, not by skill but by His command; who kindled the sun not by earthly fire, but by His supreme heat; who made all things out of nothing, and made them, O man, for thee, that thou mightest reflect upon the artificer by considering His work."

*And His brethren, James*, &c. *Brethren*, i.e., *cousins*, as I have said Chap. xii. 45.

*James:* This is James the less, called the son of Alphæus, an Apostle, and first Bishop of Jerusalem. I have spoken more at length concerning him in the preface to his Canonical Epistle.

*And Joseph*: The Greek and Syriac have *Joses*. He was one of the seventy disciples. See what I have said about him on Acts i. 23.

*And Simon*: Many think from Abdia, Sophronius, Isidore, and Bede, that this was Simon the Canaanite, the Apostle. As though this last had been the brother of James the less and Jude, But Simon the Apostle came from Cana of Galilee; but these brethren that is cousins of Christ, were sprung from Nazareth, together with Christ Himself. Wherefore the inhabitants of Nazareth wondered from whence there was in Jesus, their fellow citizen, such great wisdom, since they knew his brethren and relations to be simple and unlearned persons, as is plain from Mark vi. 1., &c. It seems therefore more probable that this Simon is the S. Simeon who succeeded S. James as Bishop of Jerusalem. For Simeon was the son of Cleophas and his wife Mary, as Hegesippus testifies (*Eus. H. E.* 3. 11.), whom SS. Chrysostom and Theophylact teach to have been the brother of S. James the less.* Although Hegesippus and Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 66.) are opinion that he was not the brother, but the cousin of James. He was that Simeon, who was crucified in the tenth year of Trajan, when he

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was 120 years old, A.D. 109; and astonished everyone by his constancy and fortitude. From this it follows that those writers who thought him to be the same person as Simon the Canaanite are mistaken.

*And Jude.* He was a brother of James the less. I have spoken of him in the preface to his Epistle.

You will ask whether these four were brethren, strictly so called, born of the same father and mother? In the first place, it is plain that James and Joses were brothers. This appears from Matt. xxvii. 56. As to the other two, Simon and Jude, some think they were brothers of James and Joses, but on the mother's side only. They say that their mother was the Mary who was first married to Alphæus, to whom she bore James and Joses, and that therefore James is called *of Alphæus*, that is, *his son;* and after Alphæus was dead, she married Cleophas, to whom she bore Simon and Jude. Thus S. Thomas (*c.* 1, *ad. Galat. Lect.* 5).

2. Baronius (*apparat. Annal. c.* 46) considers there were three sisters—*i.e.*, cousins of the Blessed Virgin—of the name of Mary. The first, Mary, the wife of Alphæus, and the mother of James and Jude (the Apostles), and Joses. 2. Mary, the wife of Cleophas, the mother of that S. Simeon who succeeded S. James in the Bishopric of Jerusalem. The third was Mary Salome, the wife of Zebedee and the mother of the Apostles James and John.

But it is clear that Mary, the wife of Alphæus is the same as Mary the wife of Cleophas, if we compare S. John xix. 25 with Matt. xxvii. 56, and Mark xv. 40. For John says: "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." But Matthew says: "Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children." And Mark: "There were also women looking on afar off; among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome."

We see here plainly, that she who is called by John *Mary of Cleophas* is called by Matthew and Mark, *Mary the mother of James and Joses;* James, I say, who is called (Acts i. and Matt. x.) not the son

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of Zebedee, but of Alphæus. Therefore, *Mary of Cleophas* and *Mary of Alphæus* are one and the same person. Cleophas and Alphæus are really one and the same Hebrew word, by a common interchange of letters. Unless you prefer to consider that one of them was the husband, the other the father, of this Mary.

Again, you may see, that she who is called Salome by Mark, is called by Matthew the mother of Zebedee's children; this, therefore, was Salome. It seems, then, that the same Mary of Cleophas, or Alphæus, was the mother of these four—viz., James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude. For Matthew and Mark (in the places already cited) call her the mother of James and Joses. But Jude was the brother of James, as he says himself in the beginning of his Epistle. Simon also, or Simeon, who succeeded his brother James at Jerusalem, was also a brother, for he was the son of Cleophas and Mary his wife. Moreover, Hegesippus, S. Chrysostom, and several other Fathers assert that this Mary was not the daughter, but the wife of Cleophas. And the same Hegesippus says this Cleophas was the brother of Joseph, the spouse of the Blessed Virgin. He is the same Cleophas to whom, with his companion, Christ made himself known on the way to Emmaus in the breaking of bread. He was slain by the Jews, in that very house of Emmaus, on account of His confession of Christ. He died a martyr, on the 25th of Sept., as the Roman Martyrology has it.

You will ask, why then do Matthew and Mark call this Mary the mother of James and Joses, but not of Simon and Jude? I reply, for the sake of brevity, and because the two first, viz., James and Joses were accounted at that time more celebrated than the other two. This Mary, the mother of so many saintly sons and daughters, died in sanctity, in Judea, on the 9th April.

*And his sisters*, &c. The sisters of James, Joses, &c., are called by Hippolytus (*Ap. Niceph. l. 2. c.* 3.), Esther, and Tama; but by S. Epiphanius (*Hæres* 78.) and Theophylact they are called Mary, Salome, who was the wife of Zebedee, and the mother of S. John and S. James the great, the Apostles, who were therefore nephews, through their sister, of James the less, Joses, &c. (*See Christophor. a Castro*

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*de Deipar. c.* 1.), where he shows that Salome was older than her brothers James and Jude. For she was the mother of John and James, who were chosen by Christ, together with their uncles, James and Jude, to be Apostles. For John seems to have been only three years younger than Christ. Hence too, only James, Joses, Simon and Jude, the sons of Cleophas, are called brothers, *i.e.*, cousins of Christ, on the father's side. But John and James the sons of Zebedee, are not called brethren of Christ, because they were not first cousins of Christ, but children of His cousin Salome. Again Christophor. gathers from hence, that James the less, who was the brother of Salome, was senior to James the greater, the son of Salome and Zebedee, by nine or ten years at the least. James the less was the uncle of James the great. For they were not so called, in respect of age but of their vocation, by Christ. It is not doubtful that Christ had many other relations and connections, but these are specially mentioned, both because they were nearer in blood; and because they at length believed on Him, and became His Apostles.

*They were offended*, &c. This is, they were indignant that Christ, who was but a workman, should set himself up for a Prophet and teacher; just as men would be offended and indignant now, if they saw any one jump out of a workshop into a Cathedral, and act the Doctor; and would accuse him of the utmost arrogance and folly. But the inhabitants of Nazareth were ignorant that Christ was the Son of God, who, out of His immense love, had not disdained to be born among workmen, and to act as one, that He might redeem us, and teach us humility by His example. Therefore this charity and humility of Christ, which ought to have made them admire and venerate Him, was a stumbling-block to them, because they would not believe that God would be willing to stoop so low.

*But Jesus said unto them*, &c. This is a common proverb, and generally, but not universally true; for John the Baptist, as well as Isaiah, Elias, Elisha, Daniel, Hosea, &c., were held in great honour by the Jews their countrymen.

Now the first cause why a prophet, that is a teacher, is frequently without honour among his own people, is what S. Jerome gives, "It

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is almost natural for citizens to have an invidious feeling towards their fellow citizens. For they do not consider a man's present works, but call to mind his frail infancy, as though they themselves had not arrived by the same gradations of age at mature years." Listen to S. Ambrose, (*c.* 4. *Luc.*). "No slight envy is that which betrays itself, which forgetful of the charity belonging to citizenship, turns the causes of love into bitter hatred. This is declared both by example and the oracle, that, in vain, do you look for the assistance of heavenly mercy, if you envy the progress of another's virtue. For the Lord despises the envious, and turns away the miracles of His power from those who disparage the divine blessings in others."

2. Because too great familiarity breeds contempt as S. Chrysostom says. And Theophylact says, "We are wont to despise those things which are very common, always paying greater regard to foreign and unaccustomed things. We admire what comes from abroad; we despise what we have at home—even when what we have at home is better. Thus, we turn up our nose at our own physicians, however learned they may be; and we purchase herbs and flowers brought from India, when we have the very same, or better, in our own woods. Of a truth 'novelty is charming.'"

3. Because by daily conversation with people, their faults, or natural infirmities, are readily disclosed; and this is apt to lessen our veneration for them. But it is otherwise in conversing with God, because the greater converse we have with Him, the more does it conduce to reverence. The inhabitants of Nazareth seeing Christ eat, drink, sleep, work like other men, despised Him, especially when they beheld His relations mean and poor: Nor, indeed, could they believe that He was born of a Virgin Mother, and had God for His Father. Let, therefore, a teacher and preacher avoid familiarity with men, lest he be despised; for, as S. Cyril says, "Preaching is not able to bring forth fruit where the preacher is despised."

*And He did not many mighty works there*, &c. (Arab.), *on account of the paucity of their faith.* This caused them to be unworthy of miracles. S. Jerome gives another reason, "That He might not

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condemn their unbelief by working many miracles." For he who beholds many miracles, and does not believe, sins more gravely than he who has beheld but few, and will be, therefore, more heavily condemned, and punished in hell. This was the cause why Christ wrought but few miracles among the Jews, says S. Jerome, "He works greater miracles among the Gentiles, day by day, by His apostles, not so much in healing men's bodies as in saving their souls."



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## CHAPTER XIV.

1 *Herod's opinion of Christ.* 15 *The Miracle of the five Loaves,* 22 *and of Walking on the Sea.*

AT that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus;
2 And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.

4 For John said unto to him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.

5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

6 But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

9 And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*.

10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother.

12 And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

13 ¶ When Jesus heard of *it*, he departed thence by ship in a desert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion towards them, and he healed their sick.

15 ¶ And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

16 But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

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18 He said, Bring them hither to me.

19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

22 ¶ And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; It is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

34 ¶ And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.

35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

The first eleven verses of this chapter relate to the decollation of John the Baptist, of which I have spoken at length on the sixth chapter of S. Mark.

*His Body:* Syriac, *sclado*, i.e., *a trunk without a head;* because, as Nicephorus says (*l.* 1, *c.* 19), "Herodias was afraid of John's reproof even after his head was cut off, and feared its being united to the rest of his body; therefore she took it away with her, and buried it without witnesses in a remote part of the kingdom. Bede and



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Ruffinus assert the same thing. Observe in this the terrors of a guilty conscience. Herodias was afraid that if the head of John were re-united to his body, he would rise again, and again denounce her incestuous marriage with Herod. Thus, Herod thought John had risen again in Christ. Thus, the Baptist's head, even when it was cut off, was a source of terror to Herodias.

*Came and told Jesus:* for John, before his death, had commanded his disciples that, when he was dead, they should transfer themselves to Jesus, as indeed some of them had done whilst he was yet alive.

*When Jesus heard*, &c. Herod, in the meanwhile, had been occupied with a war against Aretas, king of Arabia, and had not attended to the words and deeds of Jesus. But now that the fame of His many miracles was constantly increasing, he began to turn his attention to them, as Matthew relates in the beginning of this chapter; and was led to suspect that Jesus was John who had risen from the dead. This was why Jesus retired into the desert; 1, and primarily, that He may avoid Herod's fury, who (as he had beheaded John) would seek to behead him again, in the person of Jesus, especially since it might easily occur to him, or be suggested to him by the Pharisees, that this was the Messiah, the King promised to the Jews, and expected for so many ages. Wherefore, fearing to be deprived of his kingdom, he would have cut Him off, as his father sought to destroy Christ when he cut off the infants at Bethlehem. 2. He retired in order that He might refresh, by a season of quiet, His Apostles, who were now returning from their preaching, and were wearied with their many labours.

*In a ship:* that by it He might go across the Sea of Galilee, or Tiberias, as appears from John vi. 1. For this is the same history which S. John relates at greater length in his sixth chapter. Hence, it is plain that this took place about the Passover.

*A desert place*—Luke adds (ix. 10), *which belonged to Bethsaida.* Adrichomius (in his description of the Holy Land), Jansen, and others think that this desert in which Christ fed the five thousand was called Bethsaida, not because it was close to that city, but on the

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opposite shore, across the sea of Galilee, between Julias and Dalmanutha. They attempt to prove this, because S. John says Christ went away across the sea of Galilee, and Matthew (xiv. 34) that He passed over the sea.

But I say this desert was near Bethsaida, on the same shore, and so between Bethsaida and Tiberias. This is proved, 1, because Luke says expressly (ix. 10), *He departed by Himself into a desert place, which is Bethsaida.* The Arabic has, *into a desert place near the city, which is called Bethsaida.*

2. Burchard testifies the same thing—viz., that this place was near Tiberias, and is called *Mensa* (a table).

3. Because Nicephorus (*l.* 8, *c.* 3) writes that S. Helena built a church of twelve thrones in the place in which Christ fed the five thousand.

4. Because after Christ had made this multiplication of the loaves, when He fled from the multitude (who wished to make Him a king), He commanded His disciples to sail to Bethsaida, as though it had been nigh at hand. Again, John says (vi. 23): "There came other ships from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they had eaten bread, after that the Lord had given thanks." This place, therefore, was near Tiberias, *i.e.*, between it and Bethsaida. And when they did not find Him there, they went across the sea, where they found Him, as S. John subjoins.

To the argument that Christ is said to have crossed over the sea, I reply: He did not sail over to the opposite shore, but went from one part of the same shore to another place by sea, from one bay of the lake to another, or from one side of a bay to the other side, by a straight course across, instead of going round by the land and following the windings of the shore. So Francis Lucas, Maldonatus, and others. The mountain to which Jesus retired, and from which He came down to the crowds who followed Him (John vi. 3) seems to have formed this bay. Lastly, *across* means the same thing as *beyond.*

*And when the multitudes heard*, &c. You will ask, How could people on foot follow Christ going across the sea in a ship? I

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answer, that when Christ went into the ship, the multitudes spread abroad His fame through the neighbourhood in all directions. Many, therefore, were stirred up to follow Christ going in a straight course in a ship, by passing round the sea of Galilee, until they came to Bethsaida, and from thence to Capernaum, where they found Christ, as S. John relates (vi. 24, 25).

*And going forth*, from His retirement in the desert of Bethsaida, *He saw*, &c. *They were as sheep not having a shepherd*, says Mark (vi. 34). Learn hence from Christ, to prefer the care and convenience of others to your own ease and prayers.

*When evening was come*, &c.—*the time* of dinner, *i.e.*, of taking food.

*But Jesus said*, &c. Christ is preparing the way for the miracle of the multiplication of the bread. Therefore He detained the multitude until the evening, that His disciples might ask Him to dismiss them; whereupon He bids them to give them food, that thereby the miracle might be better attested and the benefit be more grateful, inasmuch as they saw themselves devoid of all means of supplying such vast numbers of people with bread in the desert. S. John adds: "He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little."

Christ asked Philip rather than the others because he was more candid and docile than the rest, but not so quick-witted, and was accustomed to ask many things that were sufficiently plain—as (in John xiv. 8) he asked Christ, saying, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Thus S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and S. Cyril.

*Two hundred pence* would amount to about £20, which would nearly suffice to purchase bread for 2000 persons. But here there were 5000 men, besides women and children. Many were also hungry from long fasting. Truly, therefore said Philip that two hundred pennyworth would not suffice for feeding so great a multitude.

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*They answered Him*, &c. These fishes were already cooked, so that they might be immediately distributed by the Apostles, when Christ bade them. S. John explains this verse (vi. 8, 9): "One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon, Peter's brother, said unto Him, There is a lad here, which five barley-loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"

*He said*, &c. That He might multiply them by His benediction. The Apostles obeyed and brought them. And this their prompt obedience and faith, together with their charity and desire to relieve the hunger of so many thousand people elicited this miracle from Christ.

*And when He had commanded*, &c. S. Mark relates the first part of this verse more at length: *and commanded them, to make them all sit down by companies upon the green grass.* These companies were the several gatherings of people collected together to dine. Whence Luke (ix. 14) calls them *feasts* (*convivia*, Vulg.) i.e., *companies of guests*, in which for the sake of propriety, the men lay down with the men, and the women by themselves with their children, as Matthew here intimates. For formerly people did not sit at tables upon benches, but reclined upon couches, which were drawn close to the tables. Here the grass supplied the place of couches. Christ commanded them to lie down in companies, that no one should be passed over without receiving his portion of bread and fish.

*Looking up*, &c. S. John has, *Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks, He distributed to those who were set down.* Wherefore the heretics explain the word *blessed*, by *He gave thanks:* but wrongly. For Christ, according to His manner, gave thanks to the Father first, then blessed the loaves. For Mark says, *looking up to Heaven he blessed and brake the loaves.* And Luke, *He looked up to Heaven, and blessed them*, viz., the loaves, *and brake and distributed them.* Christ therefore here *blessed* both God by praising Him and giving Him thanks, and also the loaves themselves. This He did in order that He might draw down Divine grace upon them, by means of which they might be multiplied, and acquire strength and efficacy to nourish, strengthen, and exhilarate so great a multitude, just as

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much as though they had been fed upon a rich feast of flesh and wine. Christ by this benediction endued these loaves with some, not physical, but moral virtue; that is to say, He ordained and appointed them for miraculous multiplication, whereby He placed His hand, as it were, *i.e.*, His own Divine virtue upon the loaves, that they should straightway be really multiplied. And this indeed He did by converting the neighbouring atmosphere, or some other material gradually, but without being perceived, into bread. For God creates nothing *de novo* out of nothing, but produces and transforms all things from the matter which was created at the beginning of the world. In a similar manner He multiplied the meal and the oil of the widow of Sarepta, for the sake of Elias. That these loaves were most excellent and endued with vast nutritive virtue is plain from this, that they were Divine loaves, produced by Christ by a miracle. For all God's works are perfect. So God, when at the beginning of the world He blessed all the various species of created things, by this blessing endued them with these very powers of generating, propagating, and multiplying themselves: for He said, increase and multiply. Thus Christ instituting the Eucharist at the last Supper, blessed the bread and transformed it into His own body. And this multiplication of the loaves by means of Christ's benediction was a kind of type of the transmutation in the Eucharist; for shortly afterwards He uttered His long discourse upon the Eucharist which S. John gives in his sixth chapter, when he compares the Eucharist to manna. "Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead, whoso eateth this bread shall live for ever." S. Augustine gives the reason (*Tract. 24. in John.*) "From whence God multiplies the crops of corn from a few grains, from thence He multiplied the loaves in His own hands. For the power was in the hands of Christ. For those five loaves were, as it were seed, not indeed committed to the earth, but multiplied by Him Who made the earth." Whence S. Chrysostom says, "Those five loaves were multiplied in the hands of the disciples, and diffused abroad after the manner of a fountain." As S. Hilary says, "Fragments succeed fragments, and that which was broken off continually escapes from Him who breaks it." As S. Jerome says, "Whilst they break there was a sowing of food."

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*Tropologically:* Christ here teaches by this action, that bread and riches, corporeal as well as spiritual, are not diminished by being given in alms, but are multiplied a hundred and a thousandfold. Thus S. John, Patriarch of Alexandria, called on account of his liberality, the Almoner, was wont to say that he learnt by daily experience, that the more he gave to the poor, the more he received from God. He used to say, "I shall see, O Lord who will leave off first, Thou in giving to me, or I in distributing to the poor." *So Leontius in his Life.* Pope Adrian II. succeeded Nicolas I. A.D. 914.—this Adrian, says Platina was a friend of Pope Sergius, from whom he once received forty *denarii* as a gift. He went home and gave them to his steward, to distribute them amongst the pilgrims and beggars who were standing in the vestibule of his house. When he attempted to fulfill his master's behest he found that it would be impossible with so small a sum to satisfy so vast a number as required assistance. He returned to Adrian, and explained how the matter stood. Then Adrian took the money, and came to the poor himself, and gave three *denarii* to everyone of them, reserving as many for his own household expenses. The steward marvelled at the miracle. Adrian said to him, do you see how kind and liberal the Lord is, especially to those who are liberal and bountiful to the poor?

S. Lydwin of Holland, a singular mirror of patience and charity, although she was poor herself was wont diligently to succour the poor. She had a few small coins in a purse: these she was always giving away, when others were supplied from heaven in their place, so that they never failed, but ever increased, and thus her purse came to be called the *Jesus purse.* Read her Life in Surius. See 2. Cor. ix. 6. seq., "He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: and he that soweth in blessings, (*Vulg.*) *i.e.* many benefits, shall reap in blessings, *i.e.* many benefits." Wherefore when you give a loaf, or a coin to a poor man, you do not lose it, but you sow it; for as from one grain of seed many grains grow, so it is likewise with loaves and money.

*They all ate.* There was a vast multitude of women and little ones

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besides the five thousand men. For the women were more devoted and more curious to behold Christ the new Prophet, than the men were.

*And were filled.* You will say, there is no mention here of wine. How then were they filled, if they drank nothing; for a dinner without anything to drink is a dog-banquet. I answer, Christ did not give them wine, because there were streams of water at hand, of which they might drink.

For to drink water is natural and wholesome, and sufficient for nature. Christ did not wish to excite their throats with wine. God gives food for necessity, not for luxury and gluttony. Thus, an angel brought to Elias in the desert bread and a cruse of water, but no wine. So a raven, by God's command, brought daily half a loaf to S. Paul, the first hermit; but he used to quench his thirst at a neighbouring fountain. God did the same to other saints. Indeed, from Adam until the Deluge—a space of sixteen hundred years, to the time of Noah, who first planted a vineyard—religious men neither ate flesh, nor drank wine; but their food was fruit, and their beverage water. Yet they lived to be nine hundred years old. Abstinence, therefore, is the mother of health, as well as of wisdom and holiness.

*And took up*, &c. They brought back, therefore, more bread than they had brought to Christ at first. For the twelve baskets would contain not five, but thirty or more loaves. It is probable Christ first broke the five loaves with His own hands, and in breaking multiplied them, and placed them in these baskets for distribution. These were afterwards, by His command, distributed by the Apostles to the different companies, and were gradually more and more multiplied; by which means they brought back to Christ as many baskets of fragments as they had received baskets of loaves from Him at the beginning. Cedrenus (*Compend. Histor.*) relates that these twelve baskets were carefully preserved in the Church of the Twelve Apostles, which Constantine the Great built at Constantinople.

In the Greek, these baskets are called *cophini*. They were much used by the Jews. This appears from a line in Juvenal:

"The Jews have cophini and hay for furniture."

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*And straightway Jesus constrained*, &c. Christ did this—first, because He wished to go apart, that He might pray more quietly and instantly, alone; as is plain from the following verse. 2. That He might in this way more easily escape from the crowd, who He knew would wish to make Him a king because He had multiplied the loaves, as S. John teaches (vi. 15). 3. That He might give an occasion for the miracle which followed—His assuaging the tempest in the sea.

*And sending away the multitude—i.e.*, with His blessing, and prayers for their welfare. Christ prays alone, to show believers that they should avoid a crowd and noise in prayer, and pray to God in secret and silence, with collected minds.

*But the ship was tossed*, &c.; Gr. *βασανιζόμενον*, i.e., *was vexed, tormented.* The Syriac is, *when it was now distant many stadia from the land, it was greatly agitated.*

*At the fourth watch*, &c.; Gr. *Φυλακῇ*, i.e., *guard.* The Romans changed guard every three hours of the night. These were their watches both in cities and armies. They changed thus frequently, lest a longer watch should give occasion to sleep, as well as to prevent guile and treachery. If the night were short, they divided it into three watches; if long, into four. The fourth watch, therefore, commenced about the tenth hour of the night, and lasted until the end of the twelfth. The time here spoken of—being immediately after the multiplication of the loaves—was about the Feast of the Passover, as we have already seen. Hence, you may gather that this tempest took place about the vernal equinox, when the day is equal to the night, each lasting about twelve hours. This tempest, then, lasted for nine hours; that is to say, during the three first vigils (or watches) of the night, until the fourth watch, when Christ came to His storm-tossed disciples. "That the Lord came to them in the fourth watch, shews they had been in peril all through the night," says S. Chrysostom. And they, having rowed for nine hours, had not made more way than about twenty-five or thirty stadia (as S. John says), or about three Italian miles. Thus, during nine hours' rowing, the Apostles had scarcely got half-way across the Sea of

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Galilee; for its breadth is about six miles, and its length sixteen. (See Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* 3, 18.) He says it is forty stadia in breadth, and one hundred in length. Adrichomius, Jansen, and others think that the Apostles rowed across the entire breadth of the sea. But others think they sailed in an oblique direction, traversing a portion of its length. For the desert was situated between Bethsaida and Tiberias, as I have shown on the thirteenth verse of this chapter.

Christ permitted His disciples to be tossed for so many hours by a tempest. 1. that He might accustom them to endure hardness. 2. that they might more ardently pray for God's help. 3. that the calming of so fearful a tempest which Christ was about to afford might be more pleasant to them.

Hear Lactantius, (*lib.* 4. *de vera Sapient. c.* 15.) "But when the disciples of Christ were now about the middle of the sea; then He entered the sea on foot, and followed after them, as though he were walking upon solid ground: not as the poets fable Orion walking in the sea, who bore the waters on His shoulders, a portion of His body being immersed." Afterwards he quotes the Sibylline verses, in which it was foretold that Christ would calm the winds and raging sea, would cure diseases, and would raise the dead. Hear also S. Augustine (*Serm.* 14. *de verb. Dom. secundum Matth.*) "*The fourth watch of the night* is the last part of the night, when the night is well nigh finished. Thus Christ will come at the end of the world, when the night of iniquity is over, to judge the quick and the dead."

*Walking upon the sea*, by the divine virtue, which He had as God, and by the gift of agility, which as man, he assumed in time, says Joannes Major, on this passage.

*And when they saw him—saying, It is a spirit.* Syriac, *a lying vision, i.e., a spectre:* both because such things are wont to walk by night and in the dark, and to appear to and terrify men, as Delrio shows by many instances (*in Magico*), as well as because, on account of the darkness, they did not recognise that it was Jesus who was walking in this manner, especially as Mark adds, *He would have passed by them*, as though he did not care for them, and had nothing to do with them, whence it follows:

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*And they cried out*: This confused clamour was elicited by fear, such as is wont to be with sailors when they fall into peril of shipwreck, and despair of life, The disciples had a twofold cause of fear. To the fear of being buried by the waves was added the fear of the spirit, lest he should sink the ship.

*And straightway—be of good cheer.* Gr. θαρσεῖτε, *i.e.*, resume your failing courage, be brave and confident. Arabic, *be strong. I am*, your Master, whom ye know, whose beneficence and omnipotence ye have experienced in so many miracles which I have wrought. Surely I would not make sport of you, like a phantom; but I intend to deliver you from the tempest, and from your fear. By this voice of Christ sounding outwardly in their ears, and inwardly in their minds, Christ took away their fear, and filled them with serenity, security, and joy.

Learn from this passage the difference between a good and an evil spirit, that the good spirit may terrify at first, but by and bye gives consolation and joy, as Christ did in this instance; but a bad spirit gives sensual joy in the beginning, but presently causes sorrow, anguish and despair.

*Peter answered Him*, &c. Calvin accuses Peter of rashness and folly. For Peter was in doubt, he says, whether the appearance were Christ, or the spectre of a demon. For the demon might have pretended that he was Christ, and have bid Peter come to him, and so have drowned him in the sea, as Delrio relates many spectres have done. The Fathers give a twofold answer: 1. Peter knew by His voice, gesture, dress, and much more by an interior recognition, that this was not a demon, but very Christ; when therefore Peter says, *if it be Thou*, it is not the voice of doubt, but of one exulting with joy, and desiring to come quickly to Christ, that he might be near to Him whom he loved above all things. So S. Hilary and S. Chrysostom, "do you perceive with what ardour Peter was burning? Do you see how great his faith was even then? No one loved Jesus so much as he did. Not only did he manifest love, but faith also. He believed not only that Christ was walking upon the sea, but that He was able to give the same power to others. He dared to ask for this power, in order that he might more quickly be with Jesus."

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2. If you take the words, *if it be Thou*, as certainly words of doubt, then it must be said that by the expression *bid me come unto Thee upon the water*, Peter asked that that command should not be given him merely, but that it should be given with power, in such manner, indeed, that together with the command He should infuse such boldness and confidence, that he should not doubt that he would walk safely upon the waves, since Christ bade him. Wherefore as soon as he felt the water beneath his feet, straightway he perceived that it did not yield to him, but that he could walk upon it. Thus Jansen: for God alone is able to glide into the mind, and to give it sure tokens of His presence, even though unknown to us, or unknown save to one who has experienced them, by which He makes the soul certain that it is He Himself who is speaking inwardly, and neither an angel, nor a demon. Such tokens the Prophets had when God revealed to them things to come. For otherwise they would have exposed both God and themselves to ridicule had they declared as God's revelation, something about to happen, unless they had been certain that it was revealed to them by God, and not by the devil assuming the appearance of God. In this way, it happened to Peter. He asked of Christ both internal and external tokens of security, which should exclude all doubt from his soul, and Christ gave him those tokens, when he said, *Come*. By these tokens was Peter sure that it was the voice of Christ, and not of a phantom or a demon.

*If it be Thou*, &c. Very beautifully does S. Augustine put the following words into Peter's mouth: "If it be Thou, I do not wonder, that Thou dost balance a solid body upon the liquid waves. Why should it be wonderful that the creature should serve its Creator? This I do not wonder at. Do something that I may wonder at. Let Peter walk. Make me to wonder. Bid me come to Thee upon the waves. For how should there not be for me a way on the sea, if Thou shalt give the command, since Thou for us wast made the Way."

*Peter came down*, &c. This was done in one of three ways. Either Christ, by His Divine power, kept up Peter, that he should not sink, as the angel kept up Habacuc by the hair of his head, and carried

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him to Babylon. Or else He did not allow Peter's body to be sufficiently heavy to sink in the waves. Or else He made the waters to be firm and solid beneath Peter's feet, like ice or crystal.

*But when he saw the wind*, &c. The strength of the wind caused Peter to fear: fear caused doubt: doubt gave rise to danger. Him whom faith bore upon the waves, doubt caused to sink. The cause was Peter's little faith, as Christ tells him. He was afraid lest Christ should allow him to be drowned by the boisterous wind and the tempestuous waves. He had not as yet received the might of faith and love which he afterwards received from the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

Christ permitted this, that Peter might recognise his own weakness, and might humble himself, and ask Christ to increase his faith, that he might become the rock of the Faith, according to the words, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build My Church."

So S. Jerome, Theophylact, and others. "Peter," says S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 51), "did what was greater, for he magnanimously went down from the ship into the sea. But from the violence of the winds and the waves he was afraid, and failed in that which was less. For it is natural to man sometimes to overcome in things that are more difficult, and succumb in those that are less." Lastly S. Augustine says, "in Peter walking upon the waters are figured those who are strong in faith, but in Peter doubting, those who are weak in faith."

*Lord save me.* From hence it is clear that Peter did not doubt that He who appeared was Christ. For otherwise he would not have called upon Him in his great peril, but upon God, as shipwrecked sailors are wont to do. His only doubt was whether Christ would allow him to be buried in the waves. Well says S. Augustine (*Serm.* 14. *de verb. Dom.*) "That shaking, brethren, was as it were the death of faith. But when he cried out, faith rose again. He could not have walked unless he had believed, neither could he have begun to sink unless he had doubted. In Peter therefore we must regard the common condition of us all, that if in any temptation the wind is about to sink us in the waves, we should cry aloud to Christ."

*And straightway—wherefore didst thou doubt!* Gr. εἰς τί ἐδίστασας,

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i.e., *why didst thou divide thy mind in two?* For two things were here presented to Peter, that is to say, the strength of the wind making him afraid of being drowned, and the voice of Christ instilling confidence and security. But the strength of the wind was more obvious, and therefore more powerful than the voice of Christ. Thus its effect was in this instance to cause Peter's faith to fail; but he rose again after his lapse.

Almost every temptation arises from distrust of God, because a man either trusts to himself, or to human aid, and does not immediately betake himself to God by prayer. Hence then let him who is tempted learn to turn away his mind from the thing which suggests the temptation, and turn it wholly to God, and fix it upon Him, and humbly implore his help. Very beautifully says S. Chrysostom, "Like as a young bird which, before it is able to fly, falls out of its nest upon the ground, whose mother quickly restores it to the nest so also at this time did Christ to Peter." Therefore let him who is tempted, invoke Christ; so shall he resist the temptation, and overcome it. For if Peter had believed the word of Christ, he would not have doubted, nor have begun to sink.

*And when they had gone up*, &c. S. John says (vi. 21.) "They wished to receive Him into the ship." This means, say Jansen and others, that they recognised Christ by His voice, and being certain that it was not a phantom, *they wished*, i.e., they invited Christ to come into the ship; and Christ complied with their invitation. They thought that when Christ was present in the ship, they would sail very rapidly, as they were accustomed to do. And this actually happened, as soon as Christ was in the ship. For as St. John subjoins, *and immediately the ship was at the land*, whither they were going, namely, Bethsaida. This was a new miracle of Christ, that from the middle of the Sea of Galilee, a distance of three miles, they suddenly, and as it were in a moment, arrived at the shore. There were therefore here four miracles of Christ. The first: that He walked upon the waters. The second, that He raised up Peter, when he was afraid, and beginning to sink. The third, that He came into the ship, and stilled the tempest. The fourth, that He immediately

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brought the ship from the midst of the sea to the shore. Thus, speaking mystically, does Christ by His grace make us to trample upon the loftiness of the world, thus does he make temptations cease, and bring us to the port of eternal bliss.

*Allegorically* and *tropologically*. S. Augustine: "Let us think of the ship as the Church and the faithful soul. The sea is this world. The wind and the waves are persecutions. When the wind arises, the ship is tossed: but because Christ is there, it cannot sink. But in these temptations let the yard-arm be raised, that, suspended to the mast, it may make the figure of the cross. To this yard-arm—that is, to the Cross of Christ—let a sincere conversation and a pure confession, like spotless sails, be attached. Let our sails be washed by the waves; let our garments be stretched out, that they may be found without spot or wrinkle. Lastly: after this ship has been built in Jerusalem, and has been sent forth into the midst of this roaring sea, the billows of the tempestuous waves, and the blasts of the raging winds—whilst they carry her about hither and thither—have borne her to the shores of every nation, and she has taken in a cargo of all the foreign merchandise which she has found."

*They came to the land of Genesar* (Vulg.): Mark has, *of Gennesaret*. S. Chrysostom and Lyra are of opinion this was the land of the Gergesenes, whose inhabitants wished Christ to depart from them, on account of their swine which He drowned in the lake. But that Gerasa, spoken of in Matthew viii., is a different place from Genesar, the place spoken of here. Gerasa, or Gergesa, was on the eastern side of the sea of Galilee; but Gennesaret was on the western side, in the direction of Capernaum and Bethsaida. For after Christ had fed the five thousand men in the desert of Bethsaida, and they wished to make Him a king, Christ, I say, fleeing from them commanded His disciples to pass over to the hither side of the bay, or the mountain of Bethsaida. This was the land of Gennesaret. In other words, they returned to Bethsaida and Capernaum. Hence Mark says (cap vi. 45.) "*He constrained His disciples to go into a ship, that they should go before Him across the strait to Bethsaida.*" S. John



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(cap. vi.), says that the disciples also came to Capernaum, which was a city on the same bank. Thus everything becomes harmonious.

The name Gennesaret signifies, *flourishing valley*. This city was formerly called *Chinneroth*, and from it the whole district derived its name, *Ceneret*, or *Cenneroth*. This by a trifling inflection became *Genesar* and *Gennesaret*. Hence the name of the adjacent Sea of Galilee, or lake of *Genesaret*. The Chaldee turns *Ceneret* into *Genesar*. Listen to Josephus (*lib.* 3, *de bello. c.* 18). "The country of Genesar extends as far as the lake of the same name. Admirable both for its natural condition and its beauty. In addition to the pleasantness of the climate, it is watered by a most fruitful spring, called by the inhabitants *Capharnaum*." Adrichomius and S. Jerome fancied Ceneret or Genesaret were the same as the City of Tiberias. But they were mistaken. Besides Tiberias was a considerable distance from Capernaum and Bethsaida. Lastly, Ceneret was in the tribe of Naphtali, as appears from Josh. xix. 35. Tiberias was in the tribe of Zabulon. And Ceneret was near Capernaum.

*And when they knew Him*, &c. Instead of *hem of His garment*, the Syriac has *wing*, the Arabic, *extremity of his garment*. The flesh of Christ was so efficacious and health-giving as to communicate its virtue to the garment by which it was covered. From hence S. Chrysostom reasons, that if those who only touched the hem or fringe of Christ's garment were healed, how much more those who touch whole Christ, yea feed upon Him in the Eucharist. What medicine can be more healing than the flesh and Deity of Christ. S. Gregory Nazianzen relates that his sister Gorgonia was healed of a mortal disease by touching the Eucharist. (*Orat.* 11).

Lastly Christ took occasion from this multiplication of the loaves to utter His discourse upon the spiritual and Eucharistic Bread, which S. John gives at length in the sixth chapter of his Gospel.

In this chapter is finished the relation of the Acts of Christ from His second Passover to His third. That is of the second year of His preaching. This may be gathered from John vi. 4, where it is said these things were done about the time of the Passover. This was the third Passover of Christ's preaching. For the First Passover is

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spoken of in John ii. 13: the second in v. 1.; and the third, as I have just said, in vi. 4.

There remains therefore the third and last year of Christ's preaching, that is to say, His acts from His third, until His fourth and last Passover, when He suffered upon the Cross.



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## CHAPTER XV.

3 *Christ reproveth the Scribes and Pharisees for transgressing God's commandments through their own traditions:* 11 *teacheth how that which goeth into the mouth doth not defile a man.* 21 *He healeth the daughter of the woman of Canaan,* 30 *and other great multitudes:* 32 *and with seven loaves and a few little fishes feedeth four thousand men, beside women and children.*

THEN came to Jesus Scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,
2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is* a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;

6 And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free.* Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

7 *Ye* hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

10 ¶ And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:

11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man: but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

13 But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

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15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

16 And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?

17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

20 These are the *things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

21 ¶ Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* to dogs.

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

29 And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.

30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:

31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

32 ¶ Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

33 And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?

34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets full.

38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

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*Then there came to Him*, &c. The Scribes of Jerusalem, as being at the very fountain head of faith and religion, arrogated to themselves the right of censuring the doctrine of new teachers, such as Christ was. They sent therefore persons to investigate what His teaching was, that they might animadvert upon it, and bring Him into subjection to themselves. The Scribes prided themselves upon their knowledge of the law, the Pharisees upon their sanctity.

*Why do thy disciples*, &c. *Bread*, in this verse, is a common Hebraism for all kinds of food. Observe: Moses, in the old Law, enjoined, by God's command, that the Jews should abstain from contact with the dead bodies of rapacious birds and unclean animals, from lepers and various other persons and things. And if any one touched them accidentally, he was accounted unclean; and was not allowed to enter the Temple until he had performed the ablutions which the law prescribed. And these corporeal washings were enjoined for the purpose of adumbrating to the dense minds of the Jews those spiritual washings of the soul, which are effected by contrition and repentance. (*See what I have said on Levit.* xi. 31.)

The Jews then, but especially the Pharisees, who wished to be accounted more religious than other people, made their whole sanctity consist in such outward and frequent washings before their meals, yea even when they were taking their food, as seems to be here intimated. This was why, at the wedding-feast at Cana, there were placed six water-pots for these purificatory purposes. This was why they so frequently washed the cups and basons, out of which they ate and drank, yea even their beds and tables, as may be seen in Mark vii. 4. They were thus careful, lest if the vessels out of which they ate were polluted, they should contaminate those who ate out of them. But all this was merely done out of custom, since the law prescribed nothing of the kind.

Observe 2. This excessive scrupulosity of the Jews was little, if indeed at all conducive to piety, or profit, since it kept them wholly intent upon external washings. And so it called off their minds from the interior care and purification of the mind from sin. Neither did God require of them this exceeding anxiety about external lus-

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trations; but seems rather to have discouraged it. (*Deut.* iv. 2). Christ therefore being about to put an end to these vain and frivolous, or noxious traditions, and being desirous of directing their whole attention to the purification of the mind, was unwilling to observe these ablutions, or to enjoin them upon His disciples, although He did not say so in express words, in order to avoid the envy and calumnies of the Pharisees.

In vain, therefore, do the heretics object this passage against Catholics, as though it were opposed to Apostolic and Ecclesiastical traditions. For these last are most profitable and spiritual, and were instituted and handed down by the Apostles and their successors for the more perfect observance of the Law of God. The other traditions were Pharisaic, that is futile, erroneous, and contrary to God's Law. Yea, the Scribes even preferred them before the Divine Law, and observed them in place of it. This is plain from the 9th verse. So SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, and others. All this becomes obvious from the Talmudists, who in the book called, *The Hundred Benedictions*, declare that the hands must be previously washed and wiped, or else the bread which is eaten is judged to be unclean. And water must be presently poured three times upon the hands, first washing the fingers, and then the whole hand. Lastly, it is necessary that in this ablution the left hand should act as a servant to the right. Such were their nugatory triflings. Moreover, the Pharisees, as S. Justin testifies (*contra Tryph.*), were called Baptists. See S. Epiphanius (*lib. i. Hæres.* 17) where he says that there was a certain sect of Scribes and Pharisees, who used to baptize themselves every day in the year. For this reason they were called *Daily Baptists.* They thought a man could not live unless he was dipped in water every day, and by this means washed and purified from every fault. There are some Jews among the Rabbies who practise the same rites even at the present day. But this is to live the life of ducks and fishes, rather than of men.

*Jesus answered*, &c., *for the sake of your tradition.* Arabic, *for the sake of your ordinances.* Instead of, *for the sake of*, some translate, *through.* But the meaning is the same in both; viz., your traditions

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set at nought and violate the Law of God. Therefore they are false and impious, and ought not to be observed.

Note the word, *your*. Your traditions were not instituted by God, or His Saints: nor by the ancient Patriarchs and Prophets. They were only invented in recent times by the Scribes and Pharisees, your predecessors. And you wish to maintain them, not from love and reverence for them, but because ye have come into their place, and because ye would arrogate to yourselves power and authority to ordain similar traditions. But there are Divine and Patriarchal traditions, which must be in every way observed. They are, that the Books of Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and the rest of the Prophets are Canonical: that God is One in Essence, Three in Person: that sins are blotted out by true contrition arising from the love of God: that infants are guilty of original sin, and therefore must be cleansed by the Sacrament which God has ordained, and so on. These traditions ye ignore, or make of none effect, O ye Scribes; being wholly taken up with your own traditions.

*For God hath said.* Gr. *ἐνετείλατο, i.e., has commanded. Honour*, &c. Honour in this place, as elsewhere in Scripture, signifies not only *reverence*, but *help, almsgiving, sustentation*. This is plain from what follows.

*And whoso curseth*, &c. Arabic, *Whoso speaketh an evil word against his father, or his mother. Die the death*, i.e., die certainly, and without any hope of pardon. The meaning is, If he who only reviles his father, or his mother in words, is by the Law guilty of death, how much more he who injures them in deed, and deprives them of that sustentation which is due to them by the law of nature; and not only deprives them, but authoritatively teaches others to deprive them of it, as ye do, O ye Scribes, by your teaching about *Corban*, as will be seen in the following verse:

*For ye say*, &c., *profited by me:* understand, *such a person does well, and shall fulfil the law of God.* The meaning is—Whatsoever gift I shall offer, or vow to God, this *shall be profitable;* both to myself and *to thee*, O my father, or my mother, in both mind and body. For God, pleased with this gift, shall, in return, liberally

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bestow gifts upon thee and me, and shall provide for your sustenance. By this manifold and specious semblance of religion and a vow, the Scribes taught that alimony might be refused to parents, if the value of it were offered to God. And they did this to bring gain and profit to themselves. For many of the Scribes and Pharisees were priests, who received the offerings made to God. Now in this matter they were manifestly in error, in that the bond and law of piety, by which children are bound to provide for their parents when poor, is of the law of nature, and therefore every vow, every offering, and all ties ought to yield to it. Thus if anyone devoted his property to God, and his father were to fall into poverty, his property must be given to his father, not to the Church. Yea, a son cannot enter a Religious Order if his parents are in extreme want; and even if he have entered, he is bound, in such a case, to come out of it, in order that he may succour them. So teach D. Thomas, Sylvester, Navarre, Toletus, and other doctors, in their explication of cases arising under the fourth commandment. (*The Anglican Fifth*). Wherefore S. Augustine, as Possidonius testifies in his life, (c. 14), refused inheritances that were offered by some persons to his Church ; because he saw it to be right and just that they should be enjoyed rather by the children, or parents, or relations of the deceased. Some legacies also that were offered by parents he restored to their children, when they desired them. And he added that "legacies ought to be offered rather than required."

Observe : *gift* in Heb. is קרבן *corban*, as in Mark vii. 11. The word is frequently used in Lev. cap. 1, 2, 3, &c., where lambs, goats, and calves, offered to God are called *corban*, i.e., an oblation. Hence the Treasury, into which offerings were cast by the people was called *corban*, or *corbana*. (See Matth. xxvii. 6.) Therefore the covetous Scribes taught the people to offer their property to God and the Temple, and to say to their parents when in want, *corban*. This was much the same as saying, like the Belgians to poor people, when they ask alms, *Godt helpe u ;* or as the French say, *Dieu vous aide*. This is a way of saying that they are unwilling or unable to help them themselves. Moreover. by saying *corban*, they shut their parents'

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mouths, by instilling into them scruples of conscience, lest they should deprive God of His own *corban*, His own offering. It was as if they said, this is sacred, it is vowed and dedicated to God. Take care then, my father, that you do not commit a sacrilege, by asking it for your own use. When the parents heard this, they were thunder-struck, and preferred to die of hunger, rather than be sacrilegious towards God.

*And honour not*, &c. These words are best taken as those of the Scribes, rather than of Christ. They gave it as the reason why a child need not succour his parents, that he preferred God to them, and honoured God with the gift which should have been given to them. Whence Mark has, *and suffer him no longer to do ought for his father or his mother.*

*Ye have made void*, Gr. ἠκυρώσατε, i.e., *ye have made obsolete, abrogated.* Observe the word *your*, for there are three kinds of traditions. The first are Divine, being such as God has sanctioned by His command, even though they are not found in Scripture. Such a tradition is—that infants must be baptized. For this is no where written, but is the constant tradition of the Church. The second are Ecclesiastical, which the Church, that is, her pontiffs and prelates have commanded, such as the ceremonies of the Sacraments; also feasts and festivals. And these are not so much human as Divine traditions, because the Church is governed by the Holy Ghost. The third are civil. These are sometimes good, and sometimes bad, because contrary to the law of God; such as these traditions of the Scribes about *corban.*

*And calling the multitude*, &c.—*understand*, I will teach you concerning the real purity, or impurity of the soul, that ye may unlearn what the Scribes have taught you, that the soul is made unclean by unclean hands or unclean food.

*Not that which—defiles:* Gr. κοινοῖ, i.e., *makes common*, i.e., *defiles.* For unclean meats were common to everyone, even to the unclean. But clean meats were only for the clean, for these alone might eat them. Hence *common* has the same meaning as *unclean.* This is plain from Acts x. 15. He means, The Scribes teach you, O people

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that it is not lawful to eat with unwashen hands, because unwashen hands make the food unclean; but unclean food makes the soul unclean, that is, displeasing to God. But they are in error, because not that which from without enters into the mouth defiles the man, but that which comes forth from the mouth, from within, and so from the heart. For sin must be voluntary, or else it is not sin, as S. Augustine says. So, too, virtue—if it be not voluntary—is no virtue.

This error of the Scribes originated in what is said in Lev. xi., where pork and other unclean meats are called execrable and abominable, and are said to pollute the soul. Whence, in verse 42, it is forbidden to pollute the soul with unclean food. And in verse 44 it is said, "Be ye holy (that is, clean in eating), for I am holy" —*i.e.*, clean. And shortly afterwards, "Pollute not your souls with any creeping thing by eating it." The Scribes took all these things ignorantly, as though the meats themselves brought pollution on the soul, in that the soul touched them in the stomach, during the process of digestion. But they were in error, because that uncleanness was legal and corporeal, but did not pollute the mind with sin. Food is not capable of sin, but the will alone. Since, therefore, food possesses no sin in itself, how can it infect the soul with sin?

Pythagoras and Plutarch (*Tract. de esu carn. et l.* viii. *Sympos. c.* 10) teach that people should abstain from flesh and beans, because they contaminate the soul. The Turks say the same of wine, which is forbidden them in the Koran. Busbequius, the imperial ambassador to the Sultan relates that he saw a Turk who, on wine being offered him—which he was greedy to drink—raised a great shout. He was asked why he did so. "I am calling out," he said, "to my soul to go down from my stomach into my feet, that it may not be polluted with the wine, forbidden by our law, which I am about to drink." Thus, in the time of Christ and the Apostles, the first heresiarchs (who arose from among the Jews, as Simon Magus, Saturninus, and afterwards Manes, Marcion, and the Encratites) taught that wine and flesh were not created by God, but by the devil, and were therefore, in their own nature, evil and to be avoided. Some of them said,

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that with the flesh of the animal they ate its soul, and that that soul had the gift of reason, and was therefore pious or impious. Hear S. Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 64): "Manes says that he who eats flesh eats a soul, and is bound to become of like nature with it; so that if he eat a bull, he will become a bull; if he eat pork, he will become a pig." Speaking of these, the Apostle says, imposters shall come, who will teach "to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." (1 Tim. iv. 3, 4.) See what I have there said. Wherefore the heretics wrest this passage against the fasts ordained by the Church. For the Church does not forbid flesh on fast days because flesh is evil in itself, but with the object of restraining gluttony, and of exercising penance and obedience. If, therefore, anyone eats flesh on a fast day, he does not sin on account of the flesh, but on account of his disobedience to the Church. In like manner, if the Jews ate pork or other forbidden food, they polluted their souls, not with the pork, but by their disobedience.

*Then His disciples*, &c., *then*, viz., when the multitude being sent away, Christ had come with His disciples into the house. This is plain from Mark vii. 17. *Were scandalised*, i.e., *were offended*, because the Pharisees made all their holiness consist in external washings, and such like things.

*But he answered*, &c., *plant, i.e.*, seed, shrub, tree, by which SS. Hilary and Chrysostom understand doctrine. That is, He means the doctrine of the Pharisees concerning unclean food polluting the soul, shall be by Me confuted and rooted up. But by *plant* others understand more correctly *men*. For these were planted by God in Paradise, but being corrupted by the serpent, are planted anew by God with Christ, who is the tree of life. They are planted through faith and grace, and then they bring forth the fruit of good works unto eternal life. Otherwise, they remain barren and corrupt trees, meet to be cast into the fire, as John the Baptist threatened the Pharisees. For they were always the enemies of Christ, and

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consequently of God the Father. Thus S. Jerome and Origen (*Hom.* I. *in Jerem.*), Maldonatus, and others.

*Let them alone*, &c. He means, let the Scribes be scandalised. Do not be troubled that they are offended at my doctrine and correction. They themselves are blind. They do not see the light of truth and of faith which I set before them, but in their blindness and error, whereby they make sanctity consist in washing and other external things, they are obstinate and incorrigible; and are *leaders of the blind*, namely, of the people, to whom they teach this error, and would drag with themselves into the pit of destruction. Wherefore I openly demonstrate this their error to the multitudes who are as yet capable of being enlightened and corrected, that they may beware of it. Christ here teaches that the scandal of the Pharisees is to be despised, when, forsooth, anyone is scandalised and offended by his own malice and perverse obstinacy. For, as S. Gregory says, "If offence be taken at the truth, it is better that scandal should arise than the truth be abandoned" (*Hom.* vii. *in Ezek.*).

*Peter answered*, &c. *This parable*, meaning the one where Christ said, *not that which entereth into the mouth*, &c.

*Without understanding*, in not perceiving that purity or impurity consists in things which pertain to the mind, especially in such things as angry words, in cursing and perjury, which proceed out of the heart, through the mouth?

*Do ye not understand . . . into the draught*, &c. Porphyry, and Julian the Apostate, from these words took occasion to charge Christ with being ignorant of physiology, as S. Jerome tells us. For not all the food which enters into the mouth goeth out into the draught, but the better part of it is converted into the substance of him who eats it, for his nourishment and increase. S. Jerome answers them as follows, "Whilst they attempt to show another's ignorance, they make an exhibition of their own. For although liquid food and light moisture be poured into the body, yet when they have done their office in the veins and limbs, and have passed through the secret passages of the body, which the Greeks call πόρους, they descend to the inferior parts, and go into the draught."

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But this statement must be received subject to limitations. For all food, but not the whole of the food, and only with respect to its fæcous portions goes into the draught. The first digestion of the food, and its conversion into chyle takes place in the stomach, from whence those portions which are useless for the purposes of nourishment are emitted into the draught. A second digestion takes place in the liver, where the chyle is converted into blood. A third digestion may be said to take place in the various members of the body, which assimilate the blood received into the veins from the liver and convert it into flesh. Then there is a separation of the useless portions by means of the pores, and they are expelled in the form of sweat. This is why Mark adds, *Goeth out into the draught, purging all meats.* Christ's meaning therefore is—unclean food does not pollute the soul, as the Scribes teach, for what is unclean and impure in the food goeth out into the draught: that therefore which remains is pure, and is converted into pure chyle, blood and flesh. Therefore it cannot defile a man, nor through him, his soul.

This saying of Christ gave rise to the error of the Master of Sentences, who teaches that all men derive from Adam a tiny particle of flesh, and in this manner contract from the same Adam, original sin, in which all have sinned. (*Rom.* v.) He says that this particle is self-multiplied, and increased by itself—as though it alone were each man's *substance*—but not by means of food. For food only warms this particle, but is not its aliment; nor does it increase it, but wholly goes forth into the draught, as Christ here saith. And that this particle alone shall arise at the last day. Hence too he gathers that Christ, although he was born of Adam, yet did not contract from him original sin, because that particle which He derived from Adam was pure, and free from every vice and sin. All this he endeavours to prove from these words of Christ. But he is refuted at length by S. Thomas (1 *p. q. ult. art.* 1.) For even though Adam had possessed a body as big as a mountain it would not have been large enough to contain as many particles as would be required for each of so many thousands of millions of men who are descended from him. Again those particles must be corruptible, since all flesh

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soon becomes corrupt. Wherefore the greater portion of the human race derive none of their material part from Adam: yet do they contract from him original sin, because they were reckoned up in him according to natural generation, (*causaliter*), because they sprung from him, as his children, by continuous descent.

Lastly Œcolampadius impurely and foolishly twists these words of Christ into an argument against the real Presence of the Flesh of Christ, in the Eucharist. He says, "If the Flesh of Christ be our food, then like food it goeth out into the draught, which is horrible to think of," But Roffensis answers him (*lib.* 5. *cap.* 29.), by saying that the Body of Christ in the Eucharist exists in an indivisible and impassible manner, and when we eat It, It is not divided, nor altered, nor digested, as common flesh is digested, consequently it has no worthless parts to go out into the draught. For the whole process of digestion and change takes place in the species of bread and wine, not in the Body of Christ.

*But that which proceedeth from the mouth*, &c. *The heart, i.e.*, the reason and the will, whose symbol, yea, their seat and workshop the heart is. For the heart supplies the vital and animal spirits which are necessary for the intellect in order to understand, and for the will in order to love. Indeed Galen teaches that our common sense (*sensus communis*), which is directly subservient to the understanding, resides in the heart. Aristotle, with more probability, thinks it resides in the brain. But the heart subserves the brain, and supplies the spirits.

*Proceed evil thoughts*, &c. As from a fountain water bursts forth, so from the heart, *i.e.*, from the will, when it is depraved by luxury, or imbued with anger, there flow out evil thoughts of lust, or revenge. They burst forth in the mouth, by means of speech: and from the mouth they break out into deeds, when we carry our words into action.

*These are the thing which defile a man*, &c. This is the conclusion, setting forth the scope and object of the parable, which is to shew that neither unclean hands, nor unclean or unwashed food defile men but an impure and depraved will alone. From hence it is plain

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that the Scribes thought that the unclean or unwashed food itself defiled the soul of the eater, as I have said on the second and third verses. For apart from such an idea, Christ does not find fault with the action of washing the hands before meals, considered in itself. For this is a custom which has prevailed amongst all nations from the most ancient times, both for the sake of health, and to put the guests in mind of inward purity.

As Virgil says:

> "The bread in baskets servants bring;
> Napkins, and water from the spring."

To sit down to table with unwashen hands is considered dirty and boorish, and a cause of disgust to a man's fellow guests. Wherefore in old time, not only Priests, but all the faithful were wont to wash their hands before prayer. Hence the words "Washing pure hands" (1. Tim. 2. viii.).* For formerly the faithful received the Eucharist in their hands, not in their mouth. See what I have there said.

*Moraliter.* Learn from these words how everyone's heart ought to be prepared, adorned and kept, forasmuch as it is the workshop of all evil and all good, of every vice and every virtue. As that elder said, who is quoted by John Moschus, "Be the doorkeeper of thine heart." And Solomon, "Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life and death." (Prov. iv. 23.)

*And Jesus departing from thence,* &c. He came into Phœnicia, the capital of which was Tyre, on the borders of the Holy Land; for Tyre was more to the south, Sidon to the north. Many, both from Tyre and Sidon, who were stirred up by the fame of the doctrine and miracles of Christ, flocked to Him in crowds.

*And behold a woman of Canaan,* &c. A Canaanite, not of Cana in Galilee, but one of the posterity of Canaan, the son of Ham, the son of Noah. The Canaanites were of the seven nations of Palestine. They dwelt near the coast, as appears from Numb. xiii. 29, and were expelled by Joshua, but not entirely. They remained in Phœnicia, that is to say in Tyre and Sidon, which the Hebrews were never able to capture. Sidon, the founder of the city of that name, is called

* Our author here seems to have read *lavantes* washing, for *levantes* lifting up. (Trans.)

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(Gen. x. 15.) the first-born of Canaan, the son of Ham. The Canaanites therefore are the same as the Phœnicians. For this reason the LXX, in Joshua v. 1. instead of *kings of Canaan*, translate, *kings of Phœnicia*. Mark (vii. 26.) calls this woman, a *Syrophoenician*, because she was from that part of Phœnicia which borders upon Syria, or rather because Syria includes Phœnicia and all the adjacent countries which lie between the Mediterranean Sea and the river Euphrates. Moreover Mark calls her *a Greek*. She was called a Greek, although she was a Syrian, because in the New Testament especially by S. Paul, all Gentiles are called Greeks. (*See Rom.* i. 17. *Gal.* iii. 28.). This was because of the wide extension of the Greek language, which in time became extended to Syria.

*Cried aloud.* A loud voice is a sign of earnestness and desire. *Have mercy upon me*, that is upon my daughter, whom I love as myself. Her torture is my torture. Yea, rather would I be tormented myself, than behold her tormented. If you will have mercy upon her by her deliverance from the devil, it will be the same as though you had shown mercy unto me. Parents have greater love for their offspring than children have for their parents.

*Son of David*, i.e., O thou Messiah, whose special work it is to have pity upon the wretched, and to cast out of them the demons, and to restore men to themselves and to God, even as the Prophets have foretold, and the Jews proclaim with united voice. This woman of Canaan knew that Christ was Messiah, partly by common report, partly by a Divine instinct.

*Vexed by a devil:* Arab. *has an evil demon.* For the devil torments, tears, excruciates the members of such as he possesses to their own great pain, and the horror of the beholders. He afflicts their souls with dreadful phantasms and spectres, and with griefs and fears. For the devil has an intense hatred against God, and consequently against man, who is the image of God. And so he injures and torments him to the utmost of his power.

The woman does not add, *Come and deliver her.* She only represents her affliction to Christ. She leaves the rest to His providence



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and His love. In this she shows her marvellous resignation, and her confidence in Christ.

*He answered her not*, &c. That He might prove and augment her faith, hope, humility and constancy: and, as S. Chrysostom says, that he might set her as an example to others.

*And His disciples . . . Send her away*, i.e., by giving her what she asks, the deliverance of her daughter. *She crieth after us.* Deliver her from the pain and labour of following our footsteps, and us from the misery of hearing her, lest she deafen us. But, "from the pleading and fervent heart, groans unutterable are emitted, whereby Christ is soothed, as with sweet music," says S. Augustine.

You may observe, Mark says, *she came into the house*, and there fell at the feet of Christ. S. Augustine says (*de consens. Evang. l.* ii. *c.* 49), that she first came to Christ in the house, as Mark relates, and that afterwards when He went out of the house she followed Him, and continued to beseech Him. But it seems more probable that she first met Christ in the way, and afterwards made supplication to Him in the house.

*But he said . . . lost sheep:* Vulg. *sheep which have perished.* Arab. *wandering sheep.* Syriac. *sheep which have wandered from the house of Israel.* It was as though He said. To the Israelites alone Christ was promised, that they should be His flock, that I as their shepherd in bodily presence, should feed them alone. Whence Christ is called by S. Paul, "the Minister of the circumcision," *i.e.*, of the Jews. (*Rom.* xv. 8.)

*She came and worshipped Him*, &c., i.e., knelt down before Christ. When this woman of Canaan was rejected by Christ, she did not stand back, nor cast away hope. She persisted more eagerly, she was more hopeful, she cried more loudly. And by this her constancy and perseverance she deserved to be heard. For God, when He is invoked, often does not answer at first, in order that he who is praying may be yet more earnest. For God will refuse nothing to those who persevere, as is plain from the example of this woman. For, "she was persistent

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in prayers, wise in her answers, faithful in her words." says S. Ambrose.

*He answered, it is not meet*, Gr. καλὸν, that is, *fair, becoming*. Christ speaks after the manner of the Jews, who were wont to call the Gentiles, as being vilest idolators, *dogs*. This is the second repulse of the Canaanitish woman by Christ, and sterner than the first. He pricks her, as it were, by calling her a dog, to whom it is customary to throw crusts of bread. By *bread* He means not corporeal, but spiritual bread, namely the grace of the Gospel and of His miracles. For these were promised to the Jews alone, as to sons of God. Mark adds that Christ said, *suffer the children first to be filled*.[1] In like manner Christ often humbles and mortifies holy souls, that they may ask yet more humbly and ardently, that they may obtain. Wisely says S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 30 *in Gen.*) "Whether we obtain what we ask, or do not obtain, let us persevere always in prayer. And let us give thanks, not only when we obtain, but even when we suffer a repulse. For when God denies us anything, it is no less a favour than if He granted it. For we know not as He knows what is good for us."

*But she said, yea Lord*, &c. She means to say, "It is altogether true what Thou sayest, O My Saviour. I acknowledge that I am a worthless dog, and not worthy that the children's bread should be given to me, who am a Gentile. Yet the dogs and the curs (in Greek the word is the same, κυνάρια) are wont to eat the crumbs of bread which fall from the tables of their master's children. Nourish me then as Thy dog. I cannot leave my master's table. You cannot drive me from Thee either by rough words or by blows. I will not leave Thee, until thou give me what I ask. Give me therefore, O most merciful Lord, only a crumb, give me this least favour of my daughter's health. Let this one crumb fall among us Gentiles, and I will gather it up." She presses Christ prudently, convincingly, and yet modestly by His own words; and by her humble faith and reasoning conquers Him willing to be conquered by her prayer, says S. Chrysostom; and S. Jerome says, "'I know,' are her words, 'that I do not deserve children's bread, nor to receive whole



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food, nor can I sit at the table with the father, but I am contented with the leavings of the dogs.'"

*Moraliter:* Contemplate the ideal of perfect prayer, and imitate it. This woman of Canaan teaches us to pray. 1. With great *humility*, in that she acknowledges herself to be a dog. 2. With *faith*, because she calls Christ the son of David, *i.e.*, the Messiah, the God and Saviour promised to the Jews. 3. With *modesty* because she sets before Christ the right of dogs and her own misery; yet does she not draw from thence the conclusion that Christ should heal her daughter, but leaves that to Him. 4. With *prudence*, in that she takes hold of Christ by His own words, and gently turns His reasoning against Himself, into an argument for obtaining her desire. 5. With *reverence*, with religion and devotion, because she made her supplication on her knees. 6. With *resignation* in that she did not say, "Heal my daughter," but "*help me*," in the manner which shall seem to Thee best. 7. With *confidence*, because although a Gentile, she had a firm hope that she would be heard by Christ. 8. With *ardour*. 9. With *charity*, in that she made intercession for her daughter, as if she were anxious for herself, saying, *help me*. 10. With *constancy* and *perseverance*, in that she persisted when she was twice repulsed and became yet more earnest in prayer. Truly says Chrysologus (*Serm.* 100.) "Deservedly is she adopted as a daughter, and raised to the table, who in her humility placed herself beneath the table." S. Laurence Justinian, the first Patriarch of Venice imitated this woman, who prayed thus to God when he was at the point of death. "I dare not ask for a seat among the happy spirits, who behold the Holy Trinity. Nevertheless Thy creature asks for some portion of the crumbs of Thy most holy table. It shall be more than enough for me, O how much more than enough! if Thou wilt not refuse some little place to this Thy poor servant beneath the feet of the least of Thine elect."

*Then Jesus*, &c. Mark has, *for this saying go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter*. Christ would not restrain any longer His admiration, but cried out as it were with wonder, *O woman great is thy faith*. As S. Chrysostom says, He would adorn her

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with a shining crown. *Let it be done to thee as thou wilt*, i.e., what thou askest. These words says Chrysostom are like those in the first chapter of Genesis. Let there be a firmament, and it was done. Whence it follows, *her daughter was healed.* See here the efficacy of fervent prayer, as Jacob wrestled with the angel and overcame him, and obtained the blessing which he asked. Therefore was he called *Israel*, that is, having power with God. Prayer therefore makes us *Israels*, having power with God.

*Tropologically*, the daughter vexed by a devil is a soul that is tempted and polluted by sin, which ought to distrust its own strength and trust in Christ. It ought to invoke Him with humility, acknowledging itself a dog (that is, a vile sinner), yet not so as to despair of pardon. It becomes a great physician to cure great diseases, and the great God to do great works, and the great Christ to sanctify and save great sinners.

*Allegorically*, this daughter is the Gentile Church. The Jews, who were formerly the children, because of their unbelief in Christ became as dogs, according to the words, "Many dogs are come about me" (Ps. xxii. 16); but the Gentiles, which were dogs, have been made children, and eat at Christ's table the bread of the Eucharist and the hidden meaning of Scripture, as it were the marrow and fatness of the wheat. So S. Jerome.

*And her daughter*, &c. Mark has, *she found the child lying upon a bed*, taking rest, securely and joyfully. The sinful soul, when delivered by the pardoning grace of Christ rests upon the bed of a tranquil, serene, and joyful conscience.

*And when Jesus had passed over*, &c. As S. Jerome says, "He went up into a mountain, that, like a bird, He might stir up His tender young ones to fly." And Rabanus: "That He might lift up His hearers to meditate upon supernal and heavenly things. He sat down, that He might show rest is only to be sought for in things above."

*And there came to Him*, &c. The Gloss explains mystically thus—"The dumb are those who do not praise God. The blind are those who do not understand the way of life. The lame are

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those who do not go along the straight road of good works." Excellently says blessed Peter Chrysologus (*Serm.* 50): "Christ came to take our infirmities, and to give us His strength; to seek things human, to give things divine; to receive injuries, to confer dignities; to bear wearisomeness, to bestow healing. For the physician, who does not bear with infirmities, knows not how to heal. And he who is not weak with the weak, cannot make the weak strong."

*They glorified the God of Israel*, because He had shown unto them Messias, the worker of so many blessings and miracles.

*But Jesus, having called His disciples*, &c. "For he would," says S. Jerome, "feed those whom He had healed." Thus perfect were Christ's works of mercy, and He would teach us to do likewise. *I have compassion*, Greek, σπλαγχνίζομαι, Hebrew אני מרחם, *ani merachem—i.e.*, I am moved and have pity in my inward bowels upon this multitude, who are suffering hunger for My sake; for they have followed Me fasting for three whole days. See here the burning desire of the people after Christ. They were so intent upon His doctrine that they even forgot their food. Moreover, Christ takes care of, first their souls, then their bodies. Let a prelate and a pastor do the same. It belongs to Christ's providence to fulfil His own declaration, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Thus S. Charles Borromæo, forgetful of himself, devoted himself wholly to the service of his people. At the time of the forty hours' prayer, he spent the whole of the forty hours in church, preaching, praying, and celebrating, without sleep or food, as is related in his *Life*. So intent was his mind upon God, that he did not feel hunger. He fed upon faith and charity, according to the saying of Christ to the Samaritan woman: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work."

*They have continued with Me*, &c. "Although," says S. Chrysostom, "when they came, they had food, yet it was now consumed. Wherefore He did not do this miracle on the first, or the second day, but on the third, when nothing was left, that

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they first being in need might receive with larger desire what was done."

*And His disciples*, &c. The Arabic is, *whence shall we find bread in the desert which shall satisfy this multitude?*

*And Jesus said*, &c. Syriac, *a small quantity of little fishes.*

*Mystically.* S. Bernard in his sermon on the Seven Loaves takes them to mean the seven gifts of God. "*The first loaf*," he says, "is the word of God, in which is the life of men, as He Himself testifies. The *second loaf* is obedience: since My food, He says, is to do the will of God. The *third loaf* is holy meditation, concerning which it is written, cogitation shall preserve thee. (*Vulg.*) In another place it seems to be called the bread of life and understanding. The *fourth loaf* is the weeping of those who pray. The *fifth* is the labour of repentance. The *sixth loaf* is the pleasant unanimity of companions. It is a loaf formed of many grains, leavened with the wisdom of God. The *seventh loaf* is the Eucharist. For the bread, He says, which I give, is My flesh, for the life of the world." The same S. Bernard in a subsequent sermon interprets *the seven loaves* of the mercies of God. The *first mercy*, he says is that He hath preserved me from many sins, into which I should otherwise have fallen. The *second*, that He hath overlooked the sinner and his sins. The *third*, that he has excited me to repentance; the *fourth*, that He hath received the penitent to favour. The *fifth*, that He hath given grace that I should not fall back into my former sins. The *sixth*, that He hath given the gift of good living. The *seventh*, that He hath given to me unworthy, to venture to hope for Heaven.

*And they all ate, and were filled—seven baskets*—as many as there were loaves. As much bread remained as there was offered to Christ at the first, indeed more, since each basket (*sporta*) which is an ordinary load for a man, as carried in the hand, would contain more than one loaf. Indeed Francis Lucas is of opinion that a *sporta* (σπυρίδα) contained two *cophini;* and was a load for two. The Arabic, however, for seven *sportæ* translates seven *cophini.* Christ wished the fragments and the crumbs to be collected, both in memory of the

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miracle, and that nothing of God's gifts should be lost, and also that He might teach us to be careful, and to use God's creatures and food with frugality. From this command of Christ it is a constitution in some religious orders that everyone should collect his own crumbs in a dish. Hear what is related in the Life of S. Odo, Abbot of Cluny. "All carefully collected the crumbs when the bread was cut, and received them with a benediction before the end of the lection. When the lesson was finished no one ventured to take either these crumbs or any other food. They looked upon the crumbs as more holy than other food on account of the miracle." This miracle is also related of a monk at the point of death, who had not ate his crumbs according to the custom, when he was in health, but suffered them to fall from the table; the devil often showed a little bag full of crumbs, and terrified the man, and forced him to cross himself and cry out. From that day forward the crumbs were collected with great care. Another miracle is related that the crumbs in the hands of a certain religious, who had carefully preserved them, were turned into pearls, which were afterwards made into an ornament for the Church. S. Francis in a vision beheld himself collecting the crumbs of bread; and being ordered from Heaven to make them all into one host, and distribute it amongst the brethren, he saw those who refused it, marked with leprosy. By and bye he received from God the following explanation of his vision: the crumbs are the words of the Gospel, the host is the Rule, the leprosy is iniquity.

*And when He had sent away the multitude . . . into the parts of Magdala.* The Vulgate has *Magedan.* Magedan is a town beyond the sea of Galilee, near Gerasa. The district is now called Magedena, says S. Jerome (*locis Hebr.*) Mark (viii. 10), instead of Magedan has Dalmanutha, either because the place had two names, as S. Augustine thinks, and some codices of Mark have Magedan instead of Dalmanutha; or rather because there were two places or towns near one another, and Christ came to the confines of both when He came to the shore which pertained to each town. Some persons are mistaken in thinking Magedan to be the same as Megiddo, where

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king Josiah was slain. Megiddo is on this side the Sea of Galilee, and far distant from Magedan. It is nigh the brook Kishon, and borders on Cæsarea and the Mediterranean. This verse belongs to the following chapter; for it was at Magedan the Scribes asked for a sign from Heaven.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

4 *The Sign of Jonas.* 5 *The Leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.* 21 *Christ foreshewth his Death.*

THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting, desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be* fair weather; for the sky is red;

3 And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to-day; for the sky is red and lowring. O *ye* hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times?

4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

5 ¶ And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread.

8 *Which* when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

12 Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

13 ¶ When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?

14 And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

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15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20 Then charged he his disciples, that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day,

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

*And there came unto Him Pharisees*, &c. They had previously asked for a sign (xii. 38). But here again they asked for one because of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves. For when they perceived that this miracle was celebrated by the multitudes who had been partakers of the bread, they called it an earthly sign, and insinuated that Christ was a magician, and by the help of the devil (who rules on the earth) had multiplied the loaves, and performed His other miracles. This may be gathered from chapter xii. 24. They ask, therefore, of Christ a sign from Heaven—that God, Who reigns above, would by it give attestation that Christ was sent by Him. And that if He did it, they would believe Christ to be the Messiah. But the Sadducees, who were atheists, thought no sign

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could be given from Heaven by God, who in their opinion had no existence. Lyra explains otherwise. He is of opinion, that the Jews were given to judicial astrology, and asked a sign of Christ, whereby He should show from the stars that He was Messiah. They thought that God had pointed out, and as it were written in the stars, all His providence about human affairs, and the whole order of the universe. But Matthew here intimates nothing of the kind. The Pharisees really seem to have alluded to the manna, as may be collected from John vi. 30, 31. As though they said, "O Jesu, Thou hast indeed multiplied bread upon earth, but give a sign from Heaven. Rain down manna from the sky, as Moses did; so shalt Thou show Thyself like unto Moses, and the new Law-giver sent by God." So Remigius, Bede, Abulensis.

*But he answered*, &c. The physical reason of this is, that the redness of the sky or the atmosphere indicates that the clouds are not dense, and therefore will be dissipated during the night, and consequently the following day be serene or free from clouds. For red is an intermediate colour between black and white. The blackness of the clouds signifies that they are thick and dense, so that the rays of the sun cannot pierce through them. Their whiteness shows that they are of very great rarity, so that the sun's rays shine through them. The redness of the clouds indicates that they are not altogether dense, or rarified, but are becoming so.

*And in the morning, it will be foul weather*—rain or wind—*for the sky is red and lowring.* The Greek word is the same as in the preceding verse—πυρράζει, i.e., *is ruddy*, στυγνάζων, i.e., *a sky bringing sorrow.* The physical reason is that if the sky be red in the morning, it indicates that there are indeed only a few clouds, but that they are so dense that they cannot be dispersed by the rising sun. Wherefore, when the sun ascends and waxes hot they are resolved into rain or wind, rather than are driven by Him elsewhere. Hear what Pliny says about the signs of the weather (*lib.* 18, *c.* 35): If the sun set clear, it is a sign of fine weather. If he set with a clear sky, and rise in the same way, it is a certain sign of fine weather. If the sun appear larger at sunrise than at sunset; if he

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rise with a bluish tinge, or set in the same way, it is a sign of rain; if of a fiery colour, it betokens east wind. When the clouds are red before sunrise, there will be wind. When they are grey, or dark intermingled with red, it is a sign of rain.

*Symbolically:* Abulensis says (*quæst.* 9.) In the first advent of Christ there was the serenity of grace: in His second advent there shall be the storm of vengeance and of hell, which God shall cause to thunder against the reprobate.

*Ye can discern the face of the sky*, i.e., its external form and appearance. *The signs of the times.* These are the signs of the time of Messiah's advent, or *of the times*, i.e., of the seventy weeks of Daniel, of the prophecy of the Patriarch Jacob (Gen. xlix. 10.), and the rest of the Prophets. For these prophecies, together with the miracles, which Christ was working every day plainly proved that Messiah was already come, and that He was Messiah. This verse must be read as an interrogation, not as Lyra reads as a negative assertion. He explains thus, ye Jews are given to astrology, and ye wish by means of the stars to discern the time of Messiah's advent. But ye are in error. For by the stars may be derived presages of fine weather, or of storm, but not of the advent of Messiah. But this is a mistake. The argument in this place is from a minor to a major, thus, "If from the signs of Heaven ye know how to discern coming fine weather, or a coming tempest, much more can ye and ought ye from the oracles of the Prophets and My miracles to recognize Me to be Messiah." So SS. Hilary, Jerome, Euthymius. It is also plain from Luke xii. 56, where Christ says, *Ye hypocrites ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth: how isit ye cannot discern this time?* i.e., of My advent. Thus in like manner there are many in the present day who are lynxes in earthly things, moles in things Divine: prudent in the world, foolish for Heaven, of piercing sight in heaping up money, most ignorant in the worship of God. Their wisdom is in their purse, they are very dull in matters of conscience. S. Chrysostom gives another explanation (*Hom.* 54.) "There are signs of the present time, and there are other signs of what is to come. The signs of healing which I show are of time present: but

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the signs of the future shall be the signs in Heaven for which ye are now asking, O ye Scribes. For then there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars. (Luke xxi. 25.) Ye therefore act like Thales, who gazing at Heaven whilst he was walking, fell into a ditch. Thus also ye gazing at the future, and neglecting the present time of grace, are going headlong to destruction."

*An evil generation*, &c. Christ repeats this verse, which we have already explained in chap. 12.

*And having left them*, &c. From Magedan He passed over the Sea of Galilee, and returned to its hither bank, as appears from the following verse. Again and again did Christ pass over this sea, that He might teach the Galileans who dwelt on either side of it, according to the prophesy of Isaiah ix. 1.

*And when His disciples*, &c., *had come*, Gr. ἐλθόντες, *i.e.*, *when they had gone*, meaning when they had ascended into the ship to cross over; for it is plain from the circumstances that this happened in the ship. For in the ship, and in sailing they would require food, of which they would find abundance in the harbour. The expression is a Hebraism. For the Hebrew verbs often denote an action not completed, but begun, or intended. So here, *when they had come*, i.e., when they had begun to come, when they were going *they forgot*, because the need of bodily refreshment had escaped their memory, through dwelling upon the company of the Lord, and the sweetness of the true bread, which was with them, *i.e.*, Christ. So says Anselm.

*Beware*, Gr. ὁρᾶτε, i.e., *see of the leaven*, i.e., of the doctrine as He explains verse 12. Of this leaven He bids them beware, not in that the Pharisees taught and expounded the law of Moses: for in that respect He says they were to be heard and obeyed. But so far as they corrupted it with their own vain traditions, contrary to the law of God, and which were like sour leaven. By these traditions they infected the minds of their hearers. Luke (xii. 1.) calls it hypocrisy, *take heed of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy*. For they had regard only to outward ceremonies and apparent sanctity, and neglected the purity of the heart. S. Jerome says, this is the leaven,

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of which the Apostle speaks. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Thus heretical doctrine, if it once cast the least spark into thy breast, will in a short time grow into a mighty flame, and take possession of the whole man.

*But they reasoned*, &c. Hugo and Dionysius expound thus: Christ said, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, because we have not taken bread, and He does not wish us to accept bread from them. Others take it more simply, thus: When the disciples heard Christ speak of leaven, they remembered that they had not taken any bread into the ship; and being afraid lest Christ might sail as he was accustomed, to some desert place, they were anxious to procure some loaves, and were disputing about it among themselves, perchance one throwing the blame of forgetfulness upon another. In this they committed two faults. First they were too anxious about the bread, and did not sufficiently trust in Christ, whose power and providence they had experienced but a little while before. The second fault was that they thought Christ was speaking of earthly leaven and bread, when He was speaking of what was spiritual.

*But when Jesus knew it*, &c. He knew this by the power of His Divinity; for He had not heard them speaking about this thing. *Of little faith*, as if I were speaking of earthly bread, for which I would have you anxious; or as if I were unable or unwilling to provide bread for you, either on board the ship or in the desert.

*How many baskets (sportas)*, &c. Since Matthew as well as Mark invariably calls these baskets *sportæ*, and the baskets of the former miracle *cophini*, it is clear that *sportæ*, were a different kind of vessel and measure from *cophini*.

*That I spake not to you concerning bread*, &c. For from leaven bread is commonly made. Ye ought to have known from My words and deeds that I was not speaking of earthly bread but of spiritual, that is to say, of doctrine.

*Then they understood*, &c. Christ's reproof sharpened their understanding.

*When He was come.....Cesarea Philippi.* This was a town of Phœnicia, situated at the foot of Lebanon. It was previously called

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Dan, because it had been captured by that tribe: and because two streams, named Jor and Dan, there unite and form the river Jordan. But because the name of Pan, the god of shepherds, was better known to the Gentiles than the Hebrew tribe Dan, the place was called by them *Paneas*. Afterwards, Philip, the son of Herod of Ascalon, who was tetrarch of Ituræa and Trachonites, enlarged it and made it the capital of his tetrarchy, and called it Cesarea, in honour of Tiberius Cæsar. It must be distinguished from the Cesarea between Dor and Joppa, which is called in the Acts absolutely Cesarea of Palestine. It was the boundary of Canaan, as promised by God to the Israelites towards the north, as Beersheba was its boundary on the south. Many of the neighbouring Gentiles flocked to this city. Therefore Christ retired to it upon this occasion, that He might teach the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and that He might speak with more freedom about the Messiah. For in Judea it was perilous to speak upon this subject; since the Scribes were ready to accuse Him to the Roman governors of aiming at royal power, and of treason against Cæsar. Again this city had been a seat of idolatry, (Judges xviii. 29, &c.). Christ therefore wished to cleanse it from this stain, and to bring it to the worship of God, yea to be the beginning and the matrix of Gentile Christian nations. It is now in the possession of the Turks, and is called Belima.

*Whom do men say*, &c. *i.e.*, whom do they say that I, who out of humility, am wont to call Myself the Son of Man, am? And especially I now so call Myself, that I may examine your faith concerning Me, O ye Apostles. The Syriac less correctly divides the sentence, in this manner, *What do men say concerning Me, that I am the Son of Man?* For Christ does not here ask whether He be so called, but asserts that He is the Son of Man, and goes on to ask what further men think about Him.

*But some said . . . or one of the Prophets.* The common people among the Jews were aware that for several hundred years Prophets had failed to be amongst them, together with the ark of the covenant and the oracles from the mercy seat. Thus they thought that Christ was not a new Prophet, but one of the ancient Prophets. For in

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Christ they beheld their virtues. their miracles and their doctrine. Few indeed were they who believed with certainty that He was the Messiah. By far the greater number did not believe. They were offended at His humility and His poverty. They thought Messiah would come with regal pomp as the Son of Solomon; as the Jews still think and expect. Wherefore although some of the people had recently said, when they saw so many miracles done by Christ, "Is not this the Son of David?" and, "This is indeed that Prophet which should come into the world;" yet this was a sudden and transient cry, elicited by beholding a miracle, not a firm and settled opinion: thus Abulensis. They thought that the soul of one of the Prophets had passed into Christ by metempsychosis. So Jansen and Baronius. Or more probably they thought one of the prophets had risen again, and Jesus was he; as though Jesus were really John the Baptist, Elias, or Jeremias: For the Pharisees and the Jews generally believed in the resurrection of the dead. This indeed is plain from what Herod said of Christ: *This is John himself who is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show themselves in Him.* Some thought Jesus to be John the Baptist, because he appeared to be very like him in age, in sanctity and in his preaching. And since John had been shortly before put to death by Herod, he was fresh in their memory, and seemed to be worthy of rising again. Others thought Christ was Elias, on account of the like zeal in both; and because Elias was not yet dead, and was expected by all the Jews to return according to the prophecy of Malachi (iv. 5): "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet." They thought therefore that Elias had returned, and that Jesus was he. Others were of opinion that Christ was Jeremiah, because Jeremiah was a most holy man, and a mirror of patience and charity; and because some thought Jeremiah would return with Elias to preach to the Jews, being moved by those words, "I have given thee for a prophet to the Gentiles." (Jer. i. 5.)

*Jesus saith to them, but whom do ye*, &c. From the words *but you*, S. Jerome gathers that Christ here tacitly, as it were, calls the Apostles *gods*. "They indeed, because they are men have human ideas, but ye, who are gods, whom do ye think that I am?" But



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S. Chrysostom says with regard to the subject itself, "The Lord by His second question admonishes His disciples to think more loftily concerning Him. By the very manner of His interrogation, He shows that those common opinions fell far short of His dignity. You, He says, who have been always with Me, and who yourselves have done so many miracles in My name, whom do ye say that I am?"

*Simon Peter answering*, &c. He who was called Simon when he was circumcised, was by Christ named Cephas, *i.e.*, Peter. Some think Peter, as it were the mouth of the Apostles, answered not for himself alone, but for all. So S. Jerome, also Anselm, S. Thomas, the Gloss, Dionysius, Lyra, Jansen, and S. Augustine. Also S. Ambrose (*l. de Incarn. c.* 4). With more probability S. Hilary, Abulensis, Maldonatus, Francis Lucas, Barradi, and others think Peter spoke for himself, and his own feeling. For the other Apostles being silent, and hesitating what reply to give, Peter being wiser than the rest, forasmuch as he was taught of God, and being more fervent, lest any one should answer unworthily concerning Christ, dashed in with his answer, and replied on behalf of all: not because he knew the mind of all, for he had not spoken with them concerning the matter, but because he wished that his own opinion should be common to them all. This was what S. Jerome and the others who have been cited really meant, namely, that Peter, as about to be constituted after the resurrection the Prince of the Apostles and of the whole Church, being more deeply taught and inspired by God, recognized the Divinity of Christ, and answered concerning it what all the rest would have answered. This is plain, because to Peter only, as the reward of this confession, Christ promised the most ample reward and prerogative. For he says to him by name above the rest of the Apostles, "*Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona*," *&c.*

*Thou art the Christ*, &c. Gr. ὁ Χριστός, with the article. Thou, I say, art the Christ, or Messiah, *i.e.*, anointed by God with the unction of the grace of the hypostatic Union with the WORD, and by this consecrated the Chief Doctor, High Priest, Prophet, and King of the world. *Doctor*, that Thou mayest teach men the will and law of God: *High Priest*, that by offering Thyself a sacrifice to God, Thou mayest

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reconcile the world to God; *a prophet*, that Thou mayest declare the secret things of God, and foretell things to come: a *king* that Thou mayest rule over Heaven and earth, and all the things which in them are.

*Son of God:* Not by grace and adoption, as all the saints are sons of God, but by nature and the Deity communicated to Thee by God the Father, by eternal generation. Wherefore the Greek has the definite article, ὁ υἱὸς, i.e., *that Son*, viz., the only natural son, of one substance with the Father. *Living*, who thus, *formaliter* lives the Divine, uncreated and beatific life, that *causaliter*, He breathes into all things created by Him, His own strength and vigour, and into living things, life and a soul. For from Him, as from a fountain and a sun of life, there floweth all the light and life of all angels, men, animals and plants. See what I have said on S. John i. 4. Thus S. Leo (*Serm. de Transfig.*): "The divine Peter, by the revelation of the Heavenly Father, overcoming corporeal things, and transcending things human, beheld the Son of the Living God, and confessed the glory of the Deity." Thus too S. Chrysostom, Hilary, Theophylact, Euthymius, S. Augustine, and Athanasius (*Serm.* 3. *contra Arian.*), and others, *passim*, who from this passage prove the Divinity of Christ.

Moreover SS. Hilary and Chrysostom and others are of opinion that S. Peter first of all men confessed the Divinity of Christ. Others deny this, saying that Nathanael confessed it before Peter, when he said, *Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel.* Nevertheless it is plain that before this confession of Peter the Apostles acknowledged Christ to be God from His very words, and from the many and great miracles which He wrought to prove it. We see this from the words of Peter (John vi. 65), "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ the Son of God." Also from the words of the Apostles themselves, "Verily Thou art the Son of God." (Matth. xiv. 33.) But the Apostles, inasmuch as they were uninstructed, had formed a very confused and poor conception of this doctrine, and believed, after a sort, that Christ was truly the



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Son of God, above other Prophets, yea that He was God. But after what manner this was so, whether by eternal generation, or by some other way they were ignorant. But Peter being enlightened by God, recognized it distinctly, clearly, and sublimely, and first being asked concerning this thing, openly and constantly confessed the same and testified in this place, that verily, Christ was peculiarly the Son of God, that is begotten of God the Father by eternal generation, and therefore consubstantial with Him, and very and eternal God. Christ required this faith concerning Himself from Peter and the Apostles —for the Apostles tacitly approved Peter's confession, and tacitly confessed the same—as well because that faith is the foundation of our justification, as because the Passion and Death of Christ were at hand, in which it was needful that the Apostles should be sustained by this faith in the Divinity of Christ; lest when He was dead, they should think faith and all other things were dead with Him. This is plain from verse 21, &c.

*Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.* That is to say, blessed and happy art thou, O Peter, on account of this new faith concerning Me; for this is a mighty gift and benefit, not of flesh and blood, that is, not of nature, but by the grace of God inspiring and revealing to thee this very thing. For this faith is the beginning and the foundation of all grace and glory, and therefore it shall lead thee, and many through thee and thy example and preaching, to eternal blessedness. For blessedness *in the journey* standeth in the faith and love of Christ: but the blessedness *of the country* is the vision and fruition of the same, according to those words of S. John for "this is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Hence the synod of Ephesus (Act III.) says, "Thrice most blessed and worthy of all praise is the Apostle Peter, who is the rock and the base of the Catholic Church, and the foundation of the true faith." Hence also has arisen the custom of the faithful of addressing the Pontiff "Most Blessed Father." Hence S. Jerome saith to Pope Damasus, "I am united to thy Blessedness," that is, to the Chair of Peter.

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***Simon Bar-jona.*** For the father of Simon Peter was called Johanna, that is John, as is plain from S. John xxi. 15, meaning "God hath given: or God hath pitied: or the gift of God, *from 'Ia'* which is contracted from Jehovah, and *'chanan,'* that is, *he hath pitied, he hath given.*" Peter, then, was the son of John, or the grace of God, because he was most pleasing to God, and full of His grace. S. Chrysostom observes, that Christ gave the addition "Bar-jona," not only according to the Hebrew custom, which always adds the name of the father to the children, but with a special reference to Peter's answer, as though Christ confirmed it and said, "Thou hast spoken truly, O Peter, that I am the Son of God, for as thou art the son of Jona, a man from a man, according to natural generation, so am I the Son of God the Father, but begotten of Him from eternity —God of God, of one substance and Godhead with Him." Symbolically Jona, that is "a dove," is the emblem of the Holy Ghost, who in the form of a dove came down upon Christ. In this place also he descended upon Peter, and revealed to him that Christ was verily and indeed the Son of God. Thus S. Jerome—"Peter obtains a name from his confession, because he had a revelation from the Holy Ghost, whose son he was to be called." Bar-jona in our language signifies "*the son of a dove.*" "For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee"—that is, not earthly parents nor friends nor any man who consists of flesh and blood has revealed unto thee that I am the Son of God—forasmuch as this knowledge far transcends all nature, and the natural knowledge of all men, but My Heavenly Father hath made it known to thee by the illumination of His grace. "What flesh and blood could not reveal, has been revealed by the grace of the Holy Ghost," saith S. Jerome. By *flesh*, S. Hilary understands the bodily eyes of S. Peter, for they had told him that Christ was a man, but the revelation of the Father alone had made known to him that He was God.

***And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.*** "And I," in Greek, "κἀγὼ" *i.e.*, but I, or now I, give back to thee as a reward, and I in turn say and promise: for as S. Jerome saith, "Christ pays back the testimony of the Apostle concerning

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Himself." Peter had said, "*Thou art the Christ—the Son of the living God;*" this true confession received a reward, namely, "*Thou art Peter.*" I therefore who am the very Son of God as thou hast confessed, I the Son of God tell and assure thee, and by saying it, I make and constitute thee, Peter, so that after Me thou mayest become the rock of the Church. Christ had promised this name to Simon (S. John i. 42), saying, "Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter:" but in this place He fulfils the promise, and gives him the name of Peter in fact. S. Leo (*Ser. III., Anniver. Ascens.*) thus expounds: "And I say unto thee, that even as My Father hath made known to thee My excellency, so do I also make known to thee that thou art Peter, *i.e.*, inasmuch as I am the inviolable Rock, &c., so likewise thou art a rock, because thou art strengthened by My strength, and the things which are Mine by My own power are thine by participation with Me."

*Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church.* The meaning is, thou art Peter; that is, the rock of the Church: for upon thee as upon a most solid rock I will build My Church: for the WORD declares and gives the reason why he is Peter, that is to say, "Thou art Peter, because upon thee as upon a rock I will build My Church." S. Augustine (*Tract 27, upon John, and B. 1 Retract,* C. 1) says, "Upon this Rock, that is upon Myself, because the rock was Christ," 1 Cor. x. 4. Calvin, (*B. 4, Inst. c. 6*), and the heretics eagerly follow this interpretation, that they may overthrow the authority and the primacy of Peter and the Pope. But that Peter himself is here called the rock, the rest of the Fathers almost universally agree. Maldonatus and Bellarmine (*B. 1, concerning the Roman Pontiff, c. 10*) quote them at large. The meaning then is this, thou art "*Kepha,*" or "*Cephas,*" *i.e.*, a rock or a very hard and very firm stone, for this is the signification of the Hebrew "*Keph,*" and of the Chaldee and Syriac "*Kepha,*" marked out and ordained by Me, that after My death, and the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, having been entirely solidified and made strong, thou mayest become the foundation of the Church which I will build upon thee. For before the coming of the Holy Ghost, Peter was very far from being the rock

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of the Church; yea through fear he denied Christ in His Passion. So then the word "Peter," and "Petra," denotes the firmness of S. Peter as a prince of the Church, and of his successors the Pontiffs, and their constancy in the faith and religion of Christ. Thus among others, Angelus Caninius on the Hebrew names of the New Testament c. xiii. 1.

Moreover, that Peter is here called the Rock, is proved first, by the pronoun "this," upon "*this* rock;" for since "this" is demonstrative it ought thus to be understood, viz. :—this rock of which I have spoken, and to whom I speak, *i.e.*, thou art Peter the rock of the Church, and upon thee as upon a rock I will build My Church. For there had been no mention made of any other rock to which the pronoun "this" could refer, except Peter. It is otherwise in 1 Cor. x., for there it is said "they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ." Here the word *rock* precedes, which he explains by saying, that it was so, typically, that is to say, represented Christ: as if Christ had spoken in French He would have said "*Tu es Pierre, et sur cest pierre je bastiray mon eglise.*"

You may say, Christ said not *thou art petra*, but *thou art Petrus*, and so deny that the pronoun *this* refers to Peter. I answer, that Christ is said to have spoken in Syriac, *thou art kepha, and upon this kepha I will build*, &c. For *kepha* means a *rock*, and hence Peter in Syriac was called *kepha*. But the Greek translator, who is followed by the Latin, gave the masculine form of the noun—namely *petrus* rather than *petra*, which is feminine: but πίτρος and πέτρα in Greek equally signify a rock or a stone. Peter therefore is the same word as *petra*, but the translator made a variation for the sake of elegance, and rendered it *thou art Peter and upon this petra*, not *upon this petros*, as in a true and proper sense he might have done, both because *petra* in Greek is more frequently used for a rock or a stone than *petros*, and because houses are properly built upon stones, not upon men. Beza allows this when he says "the Lord speaking in Syriac did not make use of a surname, but said *cepha* in both places, as in the vernacular the word *pierre* is used both as a proper and a common noun.

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In Greek, likewise, πέτρος and πέτρα differ only in their termination, not in their meaning." Thus far correctly, but mistakenly he adds, "Matthew, or whoever was his translator, seems by this difference of interpretation to have intended that Peter, who is a part of the building, should be distinguished from the rock itself on which the building stands, that is from Christ; likewise that Peter himself should be distinguished from the promise of the faith which is common to the whole Church, as ancient writers also clearly prove, in order that Antichrist (so the heretics calls the Roman Pontiff) may become most ridiculous when his followers endeavour to establish his tyranny from this passage." How petulantly and falsely Beza writes may be seen and learnt from the original passages of the Fathers which Bellarmine and Maldonatus cite, as I have already said. Besides, the text of Scripture itself is to be preferred to the translator: nor had the Greek translator a meaning different from the Syriac text, as I have previously said. I omit many other proofs, which either from what has been said, or from what will be said, will show the falsity of Beza's conclusion.

Secondly—The same thing is plain from this, that there would be a want of connection to say *thou art Peter and upon Myself the Rock I will build My church.* In this indeed there would be a lessening of the speech, and an overthrow of the benefit bestowed. For Peter might say to Christ, "I am Peter, that is the rock of the Church, how then dost thou build Thy Church not upon me but upon Thyself?"

Thirdly—Because all that goes before and that follows refer to Peter alone: "and I," he saith, "say to thee, O Peter, that is, I give and assign to thee as the reward and prerogative of thy great faith and confession, that after Myself, and after My death and resurrection, I will make thee the rock and foundation of the Church;" for this is the meaning of *I will build My Church.*"

Fourthly—Because the original oriental versions agree together in this, that *petrus* is the very same word as *petra*, and *petra* as *petrus*, whence they give the same name *Kepha* to *Petrus* and *Petra*. Christ therefore as Angelus Caninius says, spoke thus in Syriac: *ant kepha*,

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*veal kepha hadden ebne iat tsibburi;* or as the Syriac Gospel has it, *ant hu kipha, veal hada kipha ebne leidti*, that is, *thou art Cepha*, that is a rock, *and upon this Cepha*, that is *petra*, meaning upon thee, who art Peter or a rock, "*I will build my Church.*" Moreover, the Hebrew Gospel, which Sebastian Munster has edited as authentic, and as written by S. Matthew himself, has in like manner *atta kepha, veal kepha hazzot ebne eth macheli.* So also the Armenian Gospel: *Is bim*, he saith *e vera ais bim*, that is, *thou art a rock, and upon this rock I will build*, &c.; and the Arabic Gospel, *ant alsachra va ala hada, alsachra abni baiati, thou art a rock, and upon that rock I will build my Church.* The Æthiopic Gospel has *Anta quoqueh va dibazati, quoqh annesa lebcita Christianei*, that is, *thou art a rock and upon this rock I will build the Christian house*—that is the Church. The Coptic also has, *but I say unto thee that thou art this Peter, I will found my Church upon this rock*, which is none else than this Peter, otherwise there would be no connection, for he gives the reason, the *because*, why he will build the Church upon a rock, because indeed Peter will be a solid rock on which the whole Church being founded may rest securely as upon a strong foundation. The Persian is, "I say unto thee that thou art *sanac*," i.e., *a rock*, "and upon this *sanac*," that is, rock, "I will build my Church." Moreover, the Persian paraphrast explains *sanac* as a rock, adding, *thou art the rock, that is, foundation and judge.* (*Vide Peter Victor in Annotat. ad N. T. pp.* 105, 102, *where he gives at length all these versions.*)

To S. Augustine it is replied that he was misled by his ignorance of the Hebrew and Syriac languages, and therefore thought that *petrus* was something different from *petra*, and that Peter was as it were called appellatively from it *Petreius*, although it appears from the Syriac that *Petrus* and *Petra* are the same. Again, S. Augustine admits as probable the explanation of those who say that Peter is the rock of the Church; and in this respect he is at issue with Calvin, who is of opinion that such an explanation is blasphemy against Christ. Listen to S. Augustine in his sermon on the Chair of Peter. "Lastly, for strengthening the devotion of the churches he is called the rock; as saith the Lord, 'thou art Peter, and upon

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this rock I will build My Church;' for he is called the rock because he first laid the foundations of the faith for the nations, and like an immovable rock he holds the joints and the superstructure of the entire Christian edifice. Peter then is called a rock on account of devotion, and the Lord is called a rock on account of strength; as saith the Apostle, 'they drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ.' Rightly does he deserve an association in name who had obtained an association in work. Peter lays the foundation, Peter plants; the Lord gives the increase, the Lord waters." The same Augustine (*Serm.* 16 *de Sanctis*) says, "Worthy was Peter to be a foundation for building up the people of God, to be a pillar for support, a key to the kingdom."

In fine, even if that exposition of S. Augustine were allowed, although it is not the true one, still it may thence be proved that Peter, after Christ, who is the Rock and Corner Stone of the Church, is still the next foundation, rock, or stone of the Church. For then the sense would be, I am the Rock upon which I will build the Church; but thou, O Peter, art next unto Me, and the next rock of the Church, upon whom immediately after Myself I will build My Church, and therefore thee only I call Peter, who before wast called Simon. By the same arguments the Magdeburg Centuriators (*l.* 1. *cent.* 1. *chap.* 4.) are refuted, and the Genevan ministers who in their Bibles expound thus—"upon this rock, that is, upon this confession or faith—viz.: that I am the Son of God." For nowhere previously has this confession been called a rock, as Peter immediately before was called Cephas, that is, a rock.

You may say, some of the Fathers, by the *rock*, understand the faith which Peter confessed and set forth. So S. Chrysostom, S. Hilary (*l.* 6 *de Trinit.*), S. Cyril. (*l.* 4 *de Trinit.*), S. Ambrose (*l.* 6 *in Luc. c.* 9). I answer, these Fathers do not mean the faith abstractedly, but the faith as it was in Peter, and consequently they take Peter himself to be the rock of the Church, as they themselves afterwards fully explain. They hold that Peter, for the merit of his faith received the dignity of a rock in the Church. As SS. Hilary and Chrysostom say expressly; for on account of that faith he had

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deserved to be himself the foundation of the Church, and that his faith should never fail, but that he should confirm and strengthen others in the faith. (S. Luke xxii. 32.) For the Church is fashioned and renewed not of faith, but of faithful men, who are as it were its parts (for the Church is nothing else than the company of the faithful), wherefore, likewise, in order that the head of the Church may be of the same nature as the body, that head must be a faithful man —that is to say, Peter and the Pontiff. The faith then is the reason of the *founding*, but the *foundation* is Peter himself. So S. Chrysostom, Cyril (*l.* 4 *de Trinit.*) and S. Ambrose, Bellarmine (*l.* 1 *de Pont. c.* 10,) where he refutes both Erasmus and Chytræus, who follow Origen, who allegorizes after his custom, and understands by the *rock* all the faithful. In this way indeed the whole Church would be the *rock*, for the whole Church consists of none other than the faithful; but where then would be the walls, the floors, and the roof of the Church? Of what then shall these be built? (*See also Gretser in defence of Bellarm, l.* 3. *c.* 5.)

Lastly, Christ bestowed this gift upon Peter as the future Pontiff of the Church; wherefore He gave the same gift to all the other Pontiffs, his successors, and that for the good of the Church, that it might be strengthened by them as by a rock, in the faith and religion of Christ. Wherefore, S. Bernard (*l.* 2, *de Consid.*) saith to Pope Eugenius, "Who art thou? A great priest—the chief Pontiff. Thou art the prince of bishops, thou art the heir of the Apostles, thou art Abel in primacy, Noah in government, Abraham in the patriarchate; in order, thou art Melchisedeck, in dignity Aaron, in authority Moses, in judgeship Samuel, in power Peter, in unction a Christ. To thee the keys have been delivered, the sheep entrusted."

*And upon this rock.* From hence it is plain that like as *Cephas* is derived from *cepha*, so is Peter from *petra*, indeed that he is the same as *petra*, as I have already shown. Wherefore, when Optatus Milevit. (*l.* 2, *against Parmen.*) and others derive *Cephas* from the Greek κεφαλή, that is, *a head*—they do it by a congruous allusion, not by a real etymology. By a similar allusion, S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat. on the Passover*) derives Phase or Pascha—which is a Hebrew

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word, as everybody knows (Exod. xii.), from the Greek πάσχειν, that is, *to suffer*. For in the Passover happened the Passion of Christ, and His immolation as the Paschal Lamb. Moreover, Christ gave this name of rock, rather than other names (such as pillar, tower, anchor, foundation, &c.), because this name of rock is given in Scripture to Christ Himself. (Isaiah xxviii. 16; Psalm cxviii. 22; Matthew xxi. 42.) He communicated, therefore, a share in His own name, together with His dignity and office. Thus S. Jerome; and S. Gregory (*On the Seven Penitential Psalms*) says: "Christ is the rock, from which rock Peter received his name, and upon which He said that He would build." Listen to S. Leo (*Serm.* 3, *On the Anniversary of his Accession*), where he introduces Christ as speaking thus to Peter: "Since I am the rock, I the corner-stone, who make of both one; I the foundation, besides which no one can lay any other; nevertheless thou art a rock likewise, because thou art strengthened by My strength in order that what things are Mine by Mine own power, may be thine also through participation with Me: and upon this rock I will build My Church; upon this strength He says, I will construct an eternal temple, &c."

*I will build My Church.* That is to say, I therefore call thee Peter and the rock, because as a house is built upon a rock that it may rest firm and immovable upon it against every blast of the winds, so will I build upon thee, O Peter, as upon a most solid rock, My Church; that resting upon thee, it may abide firm against all the attacks of heretics and wicked men, and that thou mayest keep and sustain it in the true faith and worship of God, in like manner as a rocky foundation sustains and holds together the entire house which is built upon it. Thus S. Ambrose (*Serm.* 4) saith: "Peter is called the rock, because—like an immovable rock—he sustains the joints and the mass of the whole Christian edifice."

You may say all the Apostles are the foundation of the Church, as is plain from Eph. ii. 20, and Apoc. xxi. 20; so then Peter only is not the rock of the Church. I answer, that Peter is the rock and the foundation of the whole Church and of the entire body of the faithful, and therefore of the Apostles themselves. For the office

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of Peter—who is primate and chief—was to retain, direct, and strengthen the Apostles in faith, religion, and duty, and if at any time they should err, to correct them. Whence S. Jerome (*l.* 1, *contra Jovin.*) says: "Wherefore among twelve one is chosen, that by the appointment of a head, occasion of schism might be taken away." And S. Cyprian (*Tract on the Unity of the Church*) says, "the primacy is given to Peter that it might be shown there is one Church of Christ and one Chair."

Observe, Christ in this place promises by two metaphors, as S. Jerome says, that after His death and resurrection He will give to Peter the principality of the Church. The first metaphor is that of a foundation or foundation rock. For that thing, which in a building is the rock and foundation, in a body is the head, in a state the ruler, in a kingdom the king, in a church the pontiff. The second metaphor is that of the keys: for keys are only given to kings and rulers.

Observe, secondly: to build the Church upon this rock, signifies two things. First, that upon this reasonable stone—namely, Peter, as the head of all the Apostles—the care and government of the whole Church devolve next after Christ. Thus S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 55), S. Ambrose (*Serm.* 57), S. Gregory (*l.* 4, *Epist.* 32). Secondly, that the Church rests upon and is strengthened by Peter as a foundation, as the Vicar of Christ, so that it cannot err in matters of faith. Whence Peter, on account of his lofty confession of faith, received grace from Christ to become and to be appointed this foundation rock.

And this is the meaning of SS. Hilary, Chrysostom, Cyril—and Nyssen, in the end of his book (*Contra Judæos*)—when they say that the Church was built by Christ upon the faith and confession of Peter, as I have explained above. Moreover, S. Chrysostom in this place lays stress upon the words *I will build*, and says: "They are similar to those words 'God said,' in the first chapter of Genesis, by which words all things were created and subsist." In like manner he says: "*I will build*, hath wrought all, even though tyrants oppose, soldiers fight, the people rage, custom struggles. For the word of

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God coming like a vehement fire, hath burnt up the thorns, hath cleansed the fields, hath prepared the ground, hath raised the building on high, &c." S. Jerome also (*Epist.* 57), consulting Pope Damasus whether we may say there are three Hypostases in the Holy Trinity or only one—thus addresses him: "I am speaking with the successor of the fisherman, and the disciple of the Cross. I, following none first, except Christ, am united to your Blessedness; that is, in communion with the See of Peter. I know that upon that rock the Church is built. Whosoever eateth the Lamb outside of this house is profane; if any man be not in the ark of Noah, he shall perish in the swelling of the deluge."

*And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Namely, against the Church, because it has been founded upon Peter and his successors, as upon a most solid rock.

The gates of hell, *i.e.*, the infernal city, meaning all hell, with its entire army of demons, and with the whole power of Lucifer its king. For hell and the city of God, *i.e.*, the Church, are here put in opposition. When S. Augustine wrote his work *de Civitate Dei*, in the beginning of which he speaks of the two opposite cities; the one of God which is the Church; the other of the devil, *i.e.*, of demons and wicked men: he takes *the gates of hell* to mean heresies, and heresiarchs; for they fight against the faith of Peter and the Church, and they proceed from hell and are stirred up by the devil. So S. Epiphanius (*in Ancoratu*), not far from the beginning. There are here the two figures of speech—synecdoche and metonymy; for by the gates he means the whole city, both because the gate is the entrance into a city, and because the chief defences and strength of a city are wont to be at the gates, because if they and the adjoining walls are safe, the city is safe, if they are taken, the city is taken.

*Shall not prevail.* Heb. *lo juchelu la*, i.e., *shall not be able to stand against it*—namely, the Church. So S. Hilary and Maldonatus. More simply, *shall not prevail, i.e.*, shall not conquer or overcome, or pull down the Church. For this is the meaning of the original Greek. We have here the figure of speech, miosis: for little is said

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but much is meant; not only that the Church shall not be conquered, but that she shall conquer and subdue under her all heretics, tyrants, and every other enemy, as she overcame Arians, Nestorians, Pelagians, Nero, Decius, Diocletian, &c. Therefore by this word Christ first animates his Church that she should not be faint-hearted when she sees herself attacked by all the power of Satan and wicked men. In the second place, He as it were sounds a trumpet for her, that she may always watch with her armour on against so many enemies, who attack her with extreme hatred. Thirdly, He promises to her, as well as to her head, Peter, *i.e.*, the Pontiff—victory and triumph over them all. Again, Christ and the Holy Ghost assist with special guidance her head, the Roman Pontiff, that he should not err in matters of faith, but that he may be firm as an adamant, says S. Chrysostom, and that he may rightly administer and rule the Church, and guide it in the path of safety, as Noah also directed the ark that it should not be overwhelmed in the deluge. Wherefore S. Chrysostom (*Hom. de Verb. Isaiah*) says: "It were more easy for the sun to be extinguished than for the Church to fail;" and again, "what can be more powerful than the Church of God: the barbarians destroy fortifications, but not even the devils overcome the Church. When it is attacked openly, it conquers; when it is attacked by treachery, it overcomes." S. Augustine on the Psalms *against the Donatists*, says: "Reckon up the Bishops even from the very Pontificate of Peter. That is the very rock which the proud gates of hell conquer not." This has been made especially plain in the conversion of all nations, specially of Rome and the Romans. For Rome being the head, both of the world and of idolatry, where the idols of all nations were worshipped, has been converted from them by S. Peter and his successors, and has bowed down her proud head to the cross of Christ, which thing is of all miracles the greatest.

*And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven.* Thee—who art one person—namely, Bar-jona, or the son of Jona, as is plain from everything which precedes and follows. Not therefore in this place were the keys of Heaven promised to Peter in the person of the Church, or primarily to the Church herself, as the heretics take

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it, but to Peter himself as the head of the Church; and through him to the Church and her ministers, in like manner as to the same Peter they were specially given and consigned by Christ after His resurrection, when He said: "Feed My sheep." Thus the Greek and Latin Fathers explain, *passim*, whose words Bellarmine recites (*l.* 1 *de Pontiff, c.* 12), where in like manner he proves at length that this is the meaning of S. Augustine, when he says that Peter bore the figure of the Church, because indeed Peter was a representative of the Church as a king of a kingdom: for so indeed S. Augustine explains himself (*Tract. ult. upon S. John*), where he says: "Of this Church the Apostle Peter, on account of the primacy of his Apostleship, was a kind of general representative." And on Psalm 109, "Of which Church he is acknowledged to be the representative, on account of the primacy which was his among the disciples." Wherefore for the good of the Church Peter, as her head, received the keys from Christ; from which it is also plain that Christ promised the keys to Peter as a future Pontiff, and consequently promised the same keys to the other Roman Pontiffs, successors of Peter. For Christ in this place had regard to a most necessary matter, and of the highest moment to His ever-abiding Church—that is to say, to its perpetual head; and He ordained the best and most abiding constitution for her, namely, the monarchical, that the one Church of Christ should be ruled by the one Roman Pontiff, as S. Cyprian teaches on *the Unity of the Church*; S. Jerome (*l.* 1, *contra. Jovin.*), and others, *passim*. Our Gretzer, and after him Adam Contsen, ably refute the cavils of Calvin and his followers about this passage. *The keys*—you will ask what *the keys* here signify. Calvin answers (*l.* 4, *Inst. c.* 6, *sec.* 3), that they signify both the power to preach the Gospel, as well as the forgiveness of sins to him who believes the Gospel which promises forgiveness. But this is a jejune and worthless explanation. For by *keys* doors are opened, not the mouths of preachers. Whence *keys* specially belong to kings and rulers; not to doctors, and teachers, and preachers; wherefore *the keys* here signify properly the right to rule; whereunto pertains not only power to preach the Gospel, but also to absolve sins, to admonish, to ordain priests, to interpret Holy

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Scripture, to excommunicate, and to do all other things which pertain to the good government of the Church.

I say, therefore, by *the keys* is here signified the chief power, both of order and jurisdiction, over the whole Church, promised and delivered in this place by Christ to Peter. For with such an object in view the keys of the cities are delivered to kings and princes. And Christ thus explains *the keys* in what follows, when He says: *Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven*, &c. For he who hath the keys of a house, or of a city is its lord, to open or shut it at his pleasure: to admit into it, and to shut out of it whom he will. There is an allusion to Is. c. xxii., where God promising the principality of the synagogue to Eliakim, the Pontiff of the Old Testament, says: "And I will lay upon his shoulder the key of the house of David, so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open." Moreover, Eliakim was a type of Christ as a priest, of whom it is said (Rev. xxi.), "I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The sense then is this—I, Christ, will give to thee, Peter, as a Pontiff, and consequently to all the other Popes who come after thee, *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, by which I mean supreme authority to rule the universal Church dispersed throughout the whole world, that by *the keys*, *i.e.*, by thy power in opening or shutting the Church to men, thou mayest open or shut heaven to them. Where observe Christ said not, I will give to thee *the keys* of the kingdom of earth, lest an earthly and temporal power should be thought to be meant, but *of the kingdom of heaven*, that this power might be properly and directly exercised in spiritual things, which are those that pertain, to *the kingdom of heaven*; but that it should be exercised only indirectly with reference to temporal things, being such as are necessary, or at least very profitable to spiritual matters. Thus S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 55) teaches that by the delivery of these *keys* by Christ to Peter there was committed to him the care and government of the whole world, and that he was created pastor and head of the entire Church. Thus also S. Gregory (*l.* 4, *ep.* 32) says: "It is plain to all who know the Gospel that by the



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Lord's voice the care of the whole Church has been committed to S. Peter, the chief of all the Apostles." And he immediately adds the reason, "for to him it is said, *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*" Thus also S. Hilary on this passage, and S. Leo, (*Serm. 2 in Anniv. Assum.*), and others, *passim.* Listen also to S. Augustine (*Serm* 28 *de Sanct.*) "Peter alone among the Apostles had grace to hear, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church.*" Worthy indeed was he to be a foundation stone for building up the people in the house of God; to be a pillar to support them, a key for the kingdom. Hence also S. Ambrose (*l. 2, ep.* 13) to his sister Marcellina—when he records the contest which he had with the Arians, who had demanded that the keys of the Cathedral of Milan, over which he presided should be delivered to them, and that by the command of the Emperor Valentinian the younger, who was ruled by his mother Justina, an Arian—said: "The order is given,—'Deliver up the Cathedral.' I answer, it is neither lawful for me to deliver it, nor is it fitting for thee, O Emperor, to receive it. Thou hast no right to intrude upon the house of a private person; dost thou think, that God's house may be taken away? It is alleged, all things are lawful to the Emperor, for all things are his. I answer, Do not burden thyself, O Emperor, to think that thou hast any imperial right over those things which are Divine. Do not lift up thyself, but if thou wouldst reign long, be subject to God, for it is written, Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. To the Emperor pertain palaces, but churches to the priesthood. To him has been committed the power over the public fortifications, not of sacred buildings." Thus Hosius, bishop of Cordova, president of the Nicene Counsel, steadfastly replied to the Arian Emperor Constantius, when he made a similar demand; that to him belonged the keys of the cities, but the keys of the church to the Pontiff alone. "To thee" he says, "God has committed the empire, to us he has entrusted what belongs to the Church."

*Tropologically*, the keys denote the industry, skill and wisdom in ruling which ought to exist in a Pontiff; for a key ought to be skil-

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fully placed, fitted to, and turned in the lock, that the door may be opened; so "the art of arts is the government of souls," says S. Gregory in his *Pastoral.*

*And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven. Whatsoever, i.e.*, whomsoever, but he says *whatsoever*, because the neuter gender is fuller and of more universal application than the masculine. For the Pontiff binds and looses not men only, but sins, vows, oaths, &c. There is a transition from the metaphor of the keys to the kindred metaphor of binding and loosing; for to open and shut, to bind and loose, are akin. Whence, by it, he signifies the same thing—that by *the keys* and by *the rock* are meant the supreme authority of Peter and the Pontiffs in ruling the Church. The power therefore of *binding* is a very ample one, and is exercised by Peter and the Pontiff in various ways. First, by not absolving but retaining sins and offences, and by refusing sacramental absolution in the sacrament of penance to such as are unworthy, and without the proper dispositions, so likewise by refusing the Eucharist and other sacraments. (S. John xx. 23.) Second, by enjoining penance to the lapsed. Third, by binding such as are guilty with excommunication and other ecclesiastical censures. Fourth, by enjoining laws and precepts with respect to feasts, fasts, tithes, &c., upon the faithful. Fifth, by binding Christians with definitions of faith, when the Pontiff, *ex cathedra*, defines and declares what is to be believed, what is to be rejected, as erroneous and heretical, what monastic orders are good, what are not—what estate of life is honourable and lawful—what is not, &c. Hence, from the contraries, it is plain what is meant by *loosing;* namely, to absolve and to release from the aforesaid obligations. Christ therefore here explains the power of *the keys* through the metaphor, not of opening and shutting, which are the two proper offices of keys, but by one more powerful, that is of chains, by binding men with them, or loosing those that are bound; which power S. Peter and the Roman Pontiffs, his successors, have received from Christ over all men whatsoever, thoughout the whole world. The Pontiffs, nevertheless, give a share of this power,



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as they think good, to bishops and pastors and other ministers of the Church subordinate to them; and therefore Christ said to the other Apostles also (Matthew xviii. 18): *Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven*; by which words the same power is given to the Apostles by Christ over the whole world which is here given to Peter; but the same power is here given in an especial manner to Peter only, to signify that he has the primacy and the principality in this power, so as to be able by it to be direct, constrain, correct the other Apostles, as it were subordinate to him, and committed to his care, and hence that he might, if indeed it were needful, deprive them of it. Whence the Synod of Alexandria, over which S. Athanasius presided, agreeable to the council of Nice, writes to Pope Felix that the power of binding and loosing has been, by a special privilege granted, above others, to the Roman See by the Lord Himself.

*Upon earth:* (Following upon these words à Lapide enters upon a discussion as to how far, and in what manner the jurisdiction of the Supreme Pontiff extends over souls in hell or purgatory. He gives various opinions of theologians, not apparently of the very highest authority, which it would be wearisome to translate, and then concludes the discussion, summing up as follows: *Translator.*) In fine it is more agreeable to truth that the Pope possesses judicial power to bind and loose those only who are living upon the earth, but not the dead. When therefore he gives indulgences applicable to the departed, it is not in the way of judicial absolution, because the dead are no longer under his jurisdiction, but by way of suffrages, as he is accustomed fully to express in his Bulls—namely, by expending for the dead so much of the treasure of the Church, of which he is the steward, as the departed owe of penalties to God. For this treasure is upon earth, and is at the disposal of the Pontiff. This is the opinion of S. Thomas, Bonaventura, Alensis, Gabriel, Major, Richardus, Cajetan, D. Soto, Navarre, and Bellarmine (*Tract. de Indul.*), whom Suarez cites and follows (*de Pœnit: Disp.* 53, *s.* 2. *n. et seq.*), who also adds, that properly and directly the Pontiff can neither excommunicate the dead, nor absolve them from excommunication,

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but only indirectly, in so far as he may directly forbid, or permit the living to pray for one who is dead, and by so doing may deprive the dead indirectly of the suffrages of the Church, as though they had been excommunicated—or, on the other hand, may give them a share in those suffrages, in the same manner as if he absolved them from excommunication. When, therefore, Christ saith here to Peter *Whatsoever thou shalt loose, &c.*, by *loosing* is to be understood not only judicial absolution, but every dispensation, favour and grace as well, which, by the efficacy of that power, has been conferred upon him by Christ, and of this kind is that dispensing of the treasure of the Church which, by way of suffrages, the Pontiff expends and applies for the benefit of the faithful departed. This then is the meaning of the words *upon earth*.

*Then He commanded . . . Jesus the Christ.* Some Greek MSS. and the Syriac omit the word *Jesus*. Then the sentence flows more clearly; for all men knew that He was called Jesus, but they did not know that He was Messiah, or Christ, the true Son of God. Christ did not wish the Apostles to preach this doctrine to others, for two reasons; first, because they themselves were not as yet sufficiently instructed and confirmed in it. Secondly, because Christ was about to be put to death by the Jews. Wherefore the Jews would have been scandalised if the Apostles had preached that He was Messiah and God, and would have said to them, Away with your Christ to destruction, Who would make us Deicides—even as the Jews say to Christians now; wherefore, had they once cast away faith in Christ, they would not have hearkened to it any more, even though it had been attested afterwards by miracles. Thus they were to wait for the death, the glory, and the resurrection of Christ; that then they might proclaim Him to be Messiah and the Son of God, and confirm this doctrine by miracles, and persuade the people, as they did at Pentecost (Acts ii.), according to the words: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." (Phil. ii. 9, 10.) Thus S. Jerome: "Preach Me when I shall have

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suffered those things, since it is not expedient that Christ should be publicly proclaimed, and His majesty made commonly known among the people, when they are about shortly to behold Him scourged and crucified."

*From that time forth began Jesus*, &c. Gr. ἀπὸ τότε, *i.e.*, from this time in which He had made known to them His Divinity, He began to teach them concerning His Passion and Death. For there are two chief points of faith—namely, Christ's Divinity, and His Humanity, together with His Cross and Passion, by which He redeemed the world. There was also another reason—lest when the Apostles beheld Christ put to death, they should doubt concerning His Divinity; and He would show them that the two things were not inconsistent. For in this way only could He make perfect satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of Adam and his posterity. Lastly, He wished to instruct men how to imitate Him and bear His cross.

*And Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him. Took Him*—that is to say, apart—as though more familiarly and secretly he would chide Him out of vehement love, which before the others he did not dare to do. So S. Chrysostom, and Euthymius; and S. Jerome, who comments thus: "Peter did not wish that his confession should be brought to nought, as he had said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' for he did not think that it was possible that the Son of God should be put to death; and so he takes Him into connexion with himself, or leads Him apart that he might not appear to reprove his teacher in the presence of his fellow-disciples, and began to rebuke Him with loving affection, and to say to Him with desire, 'Be it far from Thee, O Lord;' or—as it is better—in the Greek, 'Be propitious to Thyself, O Lord.'" It will not be, says S. Thomas, that this should have, as it were, a necessary propitiation. And Christ indeed accepted the affection, but reproved the ignorance. Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee. So shameful a death shall not befal Thee; for who can endure that the Son of God should be crucified and put to death? The Greek is ἱλεώς σοι, i.e., *mayest thou be*, or *may God be propitious*

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*to thee.* So the LXX usually translates the Hebrew, *hali-la-lach, i.e.*, let there be prohibition to Thee—as formerly people were wont to say "the gods forbid"—"the gods send better things." The Syriac is *spare Thyself.* Peter speaks out of human prudence and affection, not by Divine inspiration as when he said a little before, "Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God," for here being left to himself he fails, and therefore he is reproved by Christ.

*But He turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan—thou art an offence unto Me* (Syriac, *thou art a stumbling-block unto Me*), *for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.* S. Hilary refers the *Get thee behind Me* to Peter, but the words *Satan, thou art an offence unto Me* he refers not to Peter, but to the devil, who had suggested to Peter to say, *be it far from Thee, O Lord.* S. Hilary writes thus: "For the Lord, knowing the suggestion of the Satanic craft, saith to Peter, 'Go thou backward after Me'—*i.e.*, that he should follow the example of His Passion. But He adds against *him* by whom this speech had been suggested, *Thou art an offence unto Me, Satan:* for we must not think that the name of Satan and the offence of the stumbling-block are to be applied to Peter after such great words of blessedness and power had been applied to him." But all other writers join Satan with *Get thee behind Me,* and consider that the whole was spoken to Peter. Christ therefore saith unto Peter, *Get thee behind Me—i.e.*, leave Me, depart hence, get out of My sight; for in this matter thou art not a friend unto Me, but Satan—that is, an adversary (for this is the meaning of the Hebrew "Satan," and so the Vulgate has it; 2 Sam. xix. 22, and 1 Kings v. 4)—and a scandal, that is, a stumbling-block and hindrance to Me; for thou wouldst hinder My Passion, and consequently the redemption and salvation of man, which by My Passion I am about to merit and obtain. So S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and S. Jerome, who says: "It is My own and My Father's good pleasure that I should die for the salvation of man; thou considerest only thine own will, and wouldst not that the grain of wheat should fall into the earth so as to bring forth much fruit." "And therefore," says S. Thomas, "because thou art contrary to

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My will thou oughtest to be called an adversary, for Satan is interpreted *adversary*, or *contrary;* not, however—as many think—that Satan and Peter are condemned by the same sentence, for to Peter it is said, *Get thee behind Me, Satan, i.e.*, thou who art contrary to My will, follow thou Me. But to Satan it is said, *Get thee hence, Satan;* and it is not said to him 'behind me,' that it may be understood Go away into everlasting fire." Calvin and his followers object that Christ here calls Peter *Satan;* therefore He a little previously did not call him *the rock*, nor appoint him the head of the Church. S. Jerome answers that Peter was called *Satan* (that is, an adversary) only for the particular time in which he withstood Christ, who was willing to suffer and be crucified, but that he was appointed *a rock*, not for the time then present, but for the future; namely, that after Christ's death and resurrection he should become the rock and head of the Church. Secondly, S. Augustine (*Serm.* 13, *de Verb. Dom. secundum Matth.*) and Theophylact reply, that Peter is called *blessed*, and constituted the rock of the Church, inasmuch as being enlightened by the revelation of God, he had confessed Christ the Son of the Living God, and therefore had been by Him appointed *the rock* of the Church; but that he is here called *Satan* so far as he, departing from God and God's decree (of which he was ignorant), followed human affection, on account of which he was unwilling that Christ—whom he loved so much—should die. Moreover, the fifth Œcumenical Council of Constantinople, in a constitution of Pope Vigilius, pronounces an anathema against those who explain the words of Christ (*Get thee behind Me, Satan*) to have been spoken to Peter, lest the mind of Christ, being perturbed by his dissuasion, should avoid the Passion, so that by His Passion He might be profitable to Himself, and who therefore do not believe that His death purchased the rewards of eternal life for us.* In

* The construction of this passage is somewhat involved, and the thought obscure. What appears, however, to be meant is this. First, that there were some early heretics who held that the *primary* or *chief object* of our Lord's Passion was to procure certain rewards and advantages to Himself, rather than to reconcile man to God, and obtain the salvation of the human race. Secondly, that our Lord's rebuke was given to Peter, on the ground that if He followed

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a similar way, blessed Peter Damian (*l.* 1, *Epist.* xvi. *to Pope Alex. II.*) calls Cardinal Hildebrand, who afterwards became Pope Gregory VII., "his holy Satan." Satan, because he opposed his refusing the cardinalate and returning to his Camaldolese hermitage; holy, because he did it with a holy purpose, namely, because he saw that the work of Peter was very useful to the Church.

*For thou savourest not*, &c.; Arab. *thou thinkest not;* Gr. οὐ φρονεῖς, *i.e.*, *thou understandest not*, thou dost not receive, nor approve with thine intellect and thine affections the things which are pleasing to God, but the things which human prudence, that is to say, flesh and blood, suggests. This was the fount and the cause of Peter's error, and of all other men, *that thou savourest not.* For thou wouldst consider My body and My life, and wouldst provide for human consolation contrary to God's decree, whereby He has most wisely appointed that I should die for the salvation of men. Thus men sin when they prefer the weak judgment of the flesh to the wise and lofty judgment of God. For, "the animal man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot understand them." (i. *Cor.* ii. 14).

*Then Jesus said*, &c. This medicine of self-denial and the cross Christ opposes to natural love, which Peter had shown to Christ when he would have hindered His Passion. Therefore He spake this not to Peter only, but to the other Apostles, yea even to the multitude, as Mark says (viii. 34). This is a sort of axiom of Christ's school, *if any one will come after Me*, &c. It means, says Chrysostom, "Thou, O Peter, suggestest unto Me, spare Thy life, be propitious to Thyself, but I say to thee that not only is it hurtful to thee to keep Me from My Passion, but not even thyself canst be saved, unless

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Peter's advice, and shrank from His coming Passion, He would by so doing deprive *Himself* of the benefits flowing from it.

The anathema of the Council, which is referred to in the text, seems therefore to be directed against those who would consider our Lord's rebuke to Peter as springing from the thought that, listening to S. Peter's advice would deprive Himself of the benefits of His Passion.

The heretical idea condemned by the Council is the very subtle one, that our Lord was actuated by a regard to self-interest in His voluntary submission to suffering and death.

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thou shalt suffer and renounce thy life. Christ gives three commands, first, *let a man deny himself;* second, *let him take up the cross;* third, *let him follow Me.*"

*If any man will*, &c. Christ does not compel, nor use violence, says S. Chrysostom, but invites the willing, and kindly allures and draws them. For who would not long and burn to follow Christ, the Son of God? But as God bids all follow Christ, so likewise He bids them freely choose and embrace self-denial. Again Christ draws all men, when He says "come after Me." He means, ye will not be the first in the cross, in death, in martyrdom. I, your Captain, will go before you; wherefore follow Me because I will precede you, not only by My example, but by My help, and I will make you certain of victory and the crown, if only ye will follow Me and earnestly co-operate with My grace. Thus Cato going before his soldiers through the sands of Lybia, said, "Have experience of your perils by mine. I will command nothing except what I do myself first."

*Let him deny himself: i.e.*, Let him put away from him his own judgment, and human affection. For this is the dearest to a man of all things, by which man is delighted and fed, so that he thinks it is man himself. For man is that which flourishes and lives in man. He bids therefore that every one should mortify his natural affections, so far as they are repugnant to the will of God.

Christ, as it were, says to Peter, Be thou willing to act in all thy judgments, desires, affections, and notably in the death of the cross as God hath appointed for thee, that thou mayest embrace that will, although nature and natural affection would dread it, and flee from it according to the words, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not" (*John* xxi. 18). Whence Origen explains *let him deny himself*, to mean, Let him deny his life by undergoing death for the sake of faith in Me, even as I undergo the death of the cross for God's sake. After a like manner let every believer *deny himself, i.e.*, his own desires, his own imaginations, his own human reasonings, his

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own will; and let him conform it in all things to the will of God. So too with regard to his senses, so far as they desire things forbidden by God, let him say, I will not see, or hear, or taste those things, because I wish to follow the law of God, and to please God, and not to give satisfaction to my carnal appetites.

S. Gregory observes, (*Hom.* 32 *in Evang.*) Christ does not say, Let him deny his riches, but *let him deny himself*, so that a man should go away from himself, and become a stranger to himself, yea that he should leave off to be what he was and begin to be what he was not, and become as it were a new and another man. "It is less," he says, "to deny what a man *has;* but it is far more to deny what *he is.* It sufficeth not to relinquish what is *ours* unless we leave also *ourselves.*" S. Gregory then asks the question, "Whither shall we go out of ourselves?" And he answers, "We have become something different through our fall into sin from that which we were made. Let us leave therefore ourselves, as we have made ourselves by sinning: and let us remain ourselves such as we have been made by grace. Behold, he who was proud, if he has been converted to Christ, has been made humble; he has left himself." He shows us the same thing by the example of Paul, "Let us consider how Paul had denied himself, when he said, 'I live, yet not I'; forasmuch as that cruel persecutor was dead and the pious preacher had begun to live, 'Christ indeed liveth in me.'" It is as though he said plainly, I indeed am dead to myself, because I live not after the flesh. Nevertheless I am not dead essentially, because I live in Christ spiritually. Therefore let the Truth say, let It say, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself;* because except a man cease from himself, he cannot draw nigh to Him who is above himself: nor is he able to apprehend that which is beyond himself, if he knows not how to slay that which he is.

S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 56.) illustrates the same principle by a similitude. "If thou understandest what it is to deny another, then wilt thou rightly perceive what it is to deny thyself. He who has denied another, if he see him beaten with rods, if cast into chains, he does not assist him, he is altogether unmoved, as one who is wholly apart

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from him. Thus too He wills us by no means to spare our own body, that not even though it be beaten, nor burnt, nor suffer any other thing, we should spare it." Victor of Antioch adds, "He hath not said, a man must not be too self indulgent; or that he should not spare his own flesh too much; but rising to a very lofty height, *let him deny himself*, He says, or abjure himself, that is, let him have no commerce with himself, or with his own flesh, but let him so conduct himself, as though it were not he himself who bears the cross but some other person." Note this word *abjure*. For as in baptism we renounce Satan, and as it were abjure him, so ought we fully to deny, and as it were abjure ourselves, that is our lusts. For these are more the enemies of our salvation than the devils themselves. For we dread the devil, but our lusts flatter and deceive us, and profess to be our friends. For there is greater danger from one who secretly lies in wait than from an open enemy.

In the Lives of the Fathers (*l.* 5, *libello* 1, *de profectu patrum*, *num.* 7) the Abbot John gives the following proofs of self-denial and a holy life: "Be patient under injuries, and not soon angry: be a peacemaker, and not rendering evil for evil: not looking at the faults of others, nor exalting thyself; but be subject with humility unto every one: renouncing all fleshly pleasures, and the things which are after the flesh, in humility of spirit, in fasting, in patience, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and in labours, shutting thyself up in a sepulchre, as though thou wast already dead, that death may every day seem to be very nigh unto thee." S. Agidius, a companion of S. Francis, a very holy man, and enlightened by God, was wont to give these paradoxes of self-denial which follow:

"If thou wilt see clearly, pluck out thine eyes, and become blind.

"If thou wilt hear well, be thou deaf.

"If thou wouldst speak well, become dumb.

"If thou wouldst walk well, cut off thy feet.

"If thou wouldst work well, cut off thine hands.

"If thou wouldst love well, hate thyself.

"If thou wouldst live well, make thyself die.

"If thou wouldst gain, learn to lose.

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" If thou wouldst be rich, become poor.

" If thou wouldst live in pleasure, afflict thyself.

" If thou wouldst be secure, have perpetual fear.

" If thou wouldst be exalted, humble thyself.

" If thou wouldst be honoured, despise thyself, and honour those who despise thee.

" If thou wouldst have what is good, bear evil.

" If thou wouldst be at rest, work.

" If thou wouldst be blessed, desire to be evil spoken of.

" Oh how great is this wisdom, to know how to do these things! and because they are great, they are not given unto all men."

" The same Agidius gives the following as the way of salvation, and perfection through self denial:

" If thou wilt be saved, do not ask of any human creature the reason wherefore anything befalls thee.

" If thou wilt be saved, make it thy business to rise superior to every consolation and honour which a creature can give thee.

" Woe to those who desire to be honoured for their wickedness.

" If any one contendeth with thee and thou wishest to overcome, be overcome; for when thou thinkest thou hast won, thou has lost.

" If thou lovest, thou shalt be loved.

" If thou fearest, thou shalt be feared.

" If thou doest service, service shall be done unto thee.

" If thou actest well to others, others shall behave well towards thee.

" Blessed is he who loves, and seeks not to be loved again.

" Blessed is he who serves, and seeketh not to be served. And forasmuch as these things are great, fools cannot attain unto them."

There are three things which ought more especially to cleave to thy mind. The first is, to bear willingly all tribulations. The second, to be more and more humble on account of everything which thou doest, or receivest. The third, faithfully to love those good things which cannot be seen with bodily eyes.

*Let him take up his cross.* That as I have borne Mine, he may

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follow with alacrity Me, Christ, as it were the first cross bearer, and the Standard Bearer and Captain of the cross bearers—I who bore My cross, on which I was to be crucified, on My shoulders to Mount Calvary. Luke adds the word *daily*, to signify that every day, and sometimes every hour, some trouble will come to every one, which he ought to bear bravely and patiently; and that throughout his whole life; and thus must every one live upon the cross, and die upon the cross with Christ. "He takes up his cross" says S. Jerome, "who is crucified to the world, to whom also the world is crucified, who follows a crucified Lord." This cross is, 1. persecution and martyrdom; 2. any affliction or tribulation sent by God; 3. temptation of the devil, permitted by God for our probation and humiliation, and to increase our reward; 4. self denial and the mortification of our lusts.

*His own cross, i.e.*, every one has his peculiar cross; one has it from wife, or children, or relations; another from character; a third from rivals; a fourth from misfortunes; a fifth from poverty; a sixth from exile, bonds, and so on.

2. *His own cross, i.e.*, commensurate with his strength. For God does not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, says S. Paul. He gives to every one a cross as a sort of medicine suitable to the vice from which he suffers. Thus to him who is inclined to pride, God gives some despite, or temptation of the flesh, such as He permitted to come upon S. Paul. The cross He gives to the covetous is loss of goods. To the learned, a fall into some mistake, or bad repute, lest he should be puffed up, and think too highly of himself.

3. *His own cross, i.e.*, decreed by God from eternity for his good. When therefore thou feelest the cross, think upon God, and say, "O Lord, I willingly accept this cross from thy Fatherly hand, for this is the cross which has been appointed to me from eternity, and decreed by Thee for the destruction of my faults; wherefore I render unto Thee boundless thanks. For I know and believe that by it Thou wouldst make me like unto thy well beloved Son, here in patience, and hereafter in glory. 'For, whom He did foreknow, He also

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did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.'" (Rom. viii. 29.)

4. As S. Gregory says (*Hom.* 32. *in Evang.*), "The cross is taken up in two ways, when either by abstinence the body is affected, or by compassion for our neighbour the mind is afflicted. Let us consider how in both ways Paul bore his cross. For he said, "I chastise my body and reduce it to servitude, lest perchance preaching to others, I myself should be made reprobate." (*Vulg.*) Next let us hear his mind's cross through compassion for his neighbour. For he said, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" Behold how the perfect preacher carried the cross in his body, to give an example of abstinence. And forasmuch as He took upon Himself the failings of other men's infirmity, He carried the cross in His heart."

*For he that will save his life*, &c. Greek and Vulgate, *his soul.* Forasmuch as the cross is bitter and gives pain, "Christ," says S. Chrysostom, "here animates believers to take it up, by the great reward and the crown of glory which it brings. It is as though one should say to a husbandman: 'If thou shouldst keep thy corn, thou losest it; if thou sowest it, thou renewest it. For who does not know that the corn, which decays in the dust, springs up from the same dust in a renewed form?'" Origen explains this verse in two ways. 1. Thus: If any man (being a lover of life present) spares his soul through fear of death, and thinking that his soul will perish by that death, he shall lose it, withdrawing it from life eternal. But if any one (despising life present) shall contend for the truth even until death, he shall lose indeed his soul so far as pertains to this life; but since he shall lose it for Christ's sake, he shall make it safe for the life eternal. The other explanation is as follows: If any one understands what true safety is, and wishes to gain it for the salvation of his soul, he, by denying himself, loses his soul (so far as carnal pleasures are concerned) for Christ's sake; and losing his soul in this way, he saves it through works of piety. Thus far Origen. The former explanation seems to be the more correct, and may be ampli-

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fied thus: He who in this life, fleeing from the cross and self-denial, wishes to preserve his soul—that is, his life—and therefore denies Me and My faith in persecution; or wishes to save his soul—that is, the desires of his soul—he shall lose his soul in the life to come, in hell. But he who shall lose his soul in this life for Christ's sake—either by dying for Him in persecution, or by denying his lusts for His sake—he shall find his soul, which he lost in this life, in the life to come. He shall find it in eternal glory, in the bosom of Christ, Who shall raise and glorify the soul which was exposed to death for His sake. The antithesis between *lose* and *save* requires this meaning.

*For what does it profit*, &c. *Lose*—Greek, ζημιωθῇ, i.e., *make loss, be fined.* The meaning is, What assistance shall it be to thee—for this is the meaning of the Greek ὠφελεῖ—to have gained all the riches, honours, and pleasures of the whole world, if on account of them you destroy yourself, and be fined as to your soul with the eternal torments of hell? According to the words, "If you lose all things, remember to save your soul." For wealth and pleasure, if you lose, you may recover! but the soul once lost, is lost for ever. O foolish children of Adam, why do ye so love these fleeting things, that for them ye lose your souls, and deliver them to everlasting burnings? O insensate, who for a drop of pleasure purchase eternal pains.

*Or what shall a man*, &c., *exchange;* Greek, ἀντάλλαγμα, i.e., *compensation, exchange, price, ransom.* For thy soul is above all price, all compensation; because it has been purchased and redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ, the Lord our God. Wherefore the whole world is an insufficient price for the soul of one man. For if once thou shalt lose it, by no price canst thou redeem it, nor be able to buy back thy soul with any other soul, because thou hast but one. Here, indeed, the soul is able to redeem her falls by repentance, by tears, and by good works: but in the Day of Judgment there will be no longer place for repentance and redemption. Behold, therefore, the deceit of Satan and the folly of man. Satan buys the soul of a sinner from him at the cheapest rate, for the brief pleasure of glut-

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tony, of luxury, and so on. "He offers an apple, and deprives him of Paradise," says S. Bernard.

*The Son of Man*, &c.—*according to his works, i.e.*, according to what he hath wrought, not according to what he hath known, understood, believed.

*Shall come in the glory of His Father.* This is the incentive with which Christ stirs up all to heroic acts of self-denial, of the cross, and of virtue. Hear what S. Jerome says (*Epist.* 1, *ad Heliodorum*): Thus he invites him to a solitary life, and to take up his cross—"Dost thou fear poverty? Christ calls the poor blessed. Art thou terrified at labour? But no athlete is crowned without sweat. Dost thou think about food? But faith is not afraid of famine. Dost thou fear to wear out thy limbs upon the bare ground? But the Lord lieth with thee. Does the infinite vastness of the desert affright thee? But do thou walk in Paradise in thy mind. That day will come, it will surely come, in which this corruptible and this mortal shall put on incorruption and immortality. Blessed is the servant whom the Lord shall find watching. Then when the earth with its inhabitants shall tremble at the sound of the trumpet, thou shalt rejoice. Then shall the most mighty kings tremble in their nakedness. Plato, with his disciples, shall be found a fool. The arguments of Aristotle shall not profit. But then shalt thou, a rustic and poor, exult. Thou shalt laugh, and say, Behold my crucified God, behold the Judge, who, wrapped in swathing-bands, cried in the manger." Thus S. Jerome, pathetically but truly.

*Verily I say unto you*, &c., *in His kingdom.* Syriac, *into His kingdom.* Christ promised that a reward in the heavenly kingdom should be given for good works of self-denial and the cross. Now, lest any one should find fault that it was to be put off for many ages, He shows that it was in reality near; He shows that very kingdom in the transfiguration, after a few days, to some yet alive.

*Shall not taste of death*, i.e., *shall not die.* It is a metaphor taken from the deadly cup which was given to persons condemned to die.

*In His Kingdom.* You will ask what was this kingdom of Christ; and when some of the Apostles standing there beheld it? S. Gregory



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answers (*Hom.* 32, *in Evang.*), and Bede, that this kingdom of Christ was the Church, and its diffusion throughout all nations, which verily the Apostles beheld, yea, brought about. Christ says this, says S. Gregory, that from the spread of the Church's kingdom, which they were about to behold, they might learn how great would be their future glory in the heavenly kingdom, which in this life is invisible. For God, by the visible things, which He sets forth, confirms the hope of the invisible promises. And 2. Some think that it was to take place at the resurrection, and in the day of judgment, of which Christ spake in the preceding verse. But I say it took place in the Transfiguration of Christ. For in it they beheld Christ's glorious kingdom as in a glass. Three of the Apostles, namely, Peter, James, and John, had a foretaste of this kingdom. This view is plain from what follows. All the three Evangelists who relate the Transfiguration, place it immediately after this promise, as though it were the fulfilment of it. Thus SS. Hilary, Chrysostom, Jerome, Ambrose, Theophylact, and others, *passim*. Whence S. Leo says (*de Transfig.*). *In the kingdom*, that is in royal splendour. For in His Transfiguration Christ gave to His Apostles a specimen of the glory, the joy and the happiness which the Saints shall obtain in the Heavenly Kingdom, that He might thereby animate them to Evangelical labours and sorrows, and that they might animate others to the same. After the same manner S. Jerome animates Eustochium. "Go forth," he saith, "for a little space from thy prison, and picture to thine eyes the reward of thy present labours, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man. What sort of day will that be when Mary the mother of the Lord shall meet thee with choirs of virgins? When after Pharaoh with his host has been drowned in the Red Sea, she shall sing the antiphon to the responsive choirs, as she bears the timbrel. Let us sing to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. Then shall Thecla joyfully fly to embrace thee. Then too the Spouse Himself shall meet thee, and shall say, Arise and come, My kinswoman, and My fair one, for lo the winter is passed, the rain is over. Then the angels shall wonder

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and say, who is this that looketh forth as the morning, beautiful as the moon, chosen as the sun? Then the little ones, lifting up the palms of victory, shall sing with concordant voice, 'Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest!' Then the hundred and forty and four thousand before the Throne, and before the Elders shall hold their harps, and shall chant the new song."



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## CHAPTER XVII.

1. *The transfiguration of Christ.* 14 *He healeth the lunatick,* 22 *foretelleth his own passion,* 24 *and payeth tribute.*

AND after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.

2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

6 And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

14 ¶ And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a *certain* man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

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15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

19 Then came the disciples to Jesus, apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out.

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

22 ¶ And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:

23 And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

24 ¶ And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute *money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take and give unto them for me and thee.

*And after six days*, &c. There seems to be here a discrepancy with Luke ix. 28, who says, *it came to pass about an eight days after these things*. S. Jerome answers, "The solution is simple, because in S. Matthew the intervening days are given; in S. Luke there is an addition of the first and the last day." Matthew then and Mark do not count the first day, in which Christ spoke what we have heard, and gave the promise of His Transfiguration; nor yet the last and eighth, because Christ was transfigured on the morning of it. Luke indeed only counts the entire days, and therefore says, *about*. Christ put off His promised Transfiguration for six days that, as S. Chrysostom says, the rest of the disciples might not feel any movement of envy. The second reason for delay was because Christ wished to be transfigured on Mount Tabor, which is distant from Cæsarea Philippi twenty

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leagues. Christ therefore journeying slowly according to His custom, occupied six days in preaching in the villages and country intervening. Rabanus gives a third and mystical reason—that it might be signified that the resurrection, of which the Transfiguration was a type, should take place after the six ages of the world. Origen gives a fourth reason, that it might be signified, that he alone, who transcends all worldly things (for the world was made in six days) is able to ascend above the mount on high and to behold the WORD of God.

*Peter, James, and John:* "He took up these three," says S. Chrysostom "because they were greater than the rest." Christ selected these three Apostles, and manifested His glory to them, because He willed to show the same His weakness and agony in the garden, lest they should be offended at it, and that they might know that Christ thereby was proceeding to the glory which had been shown to them. For from this glory, and from the Father's words *This is My Son*, they might know assuredly that Christ was very God; but that He was hiding His Deity beneath the veil of the flesh; and that although he suffered and died upon the cross, His Deity neither suffered nor died. And He who could communicate so great a glory to His body, was indeed able to rescue that body from death if He so willed. Hear Damascene (*Orat. de Transfig.*): "He took Peter wishing to show him that the testimony which he had borne was confirmed by the testimony of the Father; and because he was about to become the president of the whole Church. He took James because he was about to die for Christ. John because he was, as it were, the most pure instrument of theology, that beholding the glory of the Son of God, which is not subject to time, he might declare, *In the beginning was the Word.*"

*James*, &c. This was James the Greater, who was the first of the Apostles to suffer martyrdom, S. Augustine (*in cap. 2. ad Galat.*) seems by a slip of memory to have thought that this was the Lord's brother.

*Mystically.* These three denote that those whom God prefers above others to behold the vision and glory of Himself are of a threefold

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order. Peter denotes the fervent in charity; John, a virgin, signifies virgins; James, the first martyr among the Apostles, denotes those who suffer, and martyrs. Wouldst thou then see God? Be thou a Peter, *i.e.*, firm in virtue; be thou a John in chastity; be thou a James by mortifying thy vices.

*Into a high mountain*, &c. This mountain, by its loftiness, represents the height of the empyrean and of the celestial glory; and to teach, *tropologically*, says Remigius, "that it is necessary for all, who desire to contemplate God, that they must not wallow in grovelling pleasures, but by love of things above must be lifted up to heaven. Moreover they are led up by themselves apart, because holy men are separated from the wicked in their minds, and by the intention of their faith, and shall be wholly separated in the world to come." For, as Bede says, they who expect the fruit of the resurrection ought to dwell in their mind in high places, and give themselves up to constant prayer.

You will ask what mountain this was? The common opinion is that it was Mount Tabor. This is the opinion of the Fathers and of the faithful, so that it appears to be a tradition of the Church; and therefore Mount Tabor is accounted by Christians to be holy. It was made famous by pilgrimages, as S. Jerome testifies. (*Epist.* 27.) For all who make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, visit Tabor equally with Bethlehem, Mount Calvary, and Olivet. Thus S. Paula, twelve hundred years ago, when visiting the holy places, visited Tabor. For as S. Jerome says eloquently in her epitaph, "She climbed Mount Tabor, on which Christ was transfigured."

That Christ was transfigured on Tabor is taught expressly by S. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catech.* 12), Damascene (*Serm. de Transfig.*), Bede and Euthymius, Abulensis, Maldonatus, Jansen, Adrichonius (*Descript. terræ sanct.*) and others, *passim*. Damascene confirms this from the words in Psalm lxxxix, 12, "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy Name." For Hermon rejoiced when it heard the Father's voice at the Baptism of Christ; Tabor, when it saw Christ transfigured upon it. Then Tabor contended with the empyrean, being as it were the image and the theatre of celestial glory. For as the

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blessed behold the glory of God in heaven, so the Apostles beheld the glory of Christ on Tabor. Bede says, that in memory of Christ's transfiguration in the presence of Moses and Elias three tabernacles were built on Mount Tabor, according to Peter's wish, *Let us make here three tabernacles.* Nicephorus (*lib.* 8, *cap.* 30.) adds that S. Helena erected a splendid church on Tabor in memory of the Transfiguration. To this temple were afterwards joined two monasteries, one dedicated to Elias, the other to Moses.

Christ chose Tabor for the manifestation of His glory, 1. because it was near to Nazareth, where He was conceived, and the WORD was made Flesh. 2. Because Tabor is nigh to Sharon, concerning which Isaiah sings (xxxv. 2): "The glory of Lebanon is given unto it, the beauty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God." 3. Because Tabor is an *exceeding high mountain.* Josephus (*lib.* 4, *de bello, c.* 2) says it is 30 stadia in height, or nearly four Italian miles. 4. Because as Bede says, Tabor is in the middle of the Galilean plain, three miles to the north of Gennesaret. It is round on all sides, rising with a gentle elevation from the plain; it is covered with grass and flowers, and is exceedingly pleasant; it is a sort of paradise. Adrichomius adds that the climate of Tabor is exceedingly salubrious; it is planted all over with vines, olives, and various sorts of fruit and other trees. It is verdant with constant dews, with the foliage of trees and green grass; and is always fragrant with the odour of all kinds of flowers. There is there a vast concourse of birds, who make delicious melody with their songs. On the exact spot of the Lord's Transfiguration there is at present a garden, planted with trees and irrigated by fountains, and surrounded by a wall. The people who live at the foot of the mountain do not allow anyone to approach this spot out of reverence and devotion.

*Symbolically: Tabor* in Hebrew is the same as *bed of purity and light.* תא, *ta* means *bed*, and אור *or*, *light*, and the *beth* in the middle signifies *in.* Thus it is, *the bed in light.* S. Jerome (Hosea, c. 5) gives another meaning. Tabor, he says, means *the coming light.* Again, Tabor may be translated, *ta*, i.e., *a bed*, and *bor*, *i.e.*,

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*a cistern* or *sepulchre;* because on Tabor Moses and Elias spake of the decease of Christ. For by this way Christ must needs go to His glory and to Heaven, and we must go by the same way. Luke adds, *Christ went up into the mountain to pray; and it came to pass whilst He was praying the fashion of His countenance was altered,* that He might show us the fruit of prayer—namely, that in prayer we are suffused with heavenly light, and are, as it were, transfigured; and instead of earthly are made celestial and divine; and instead of men become angels. Moses was a type of this when he talked with God upon Mount Sinai, and the glory of the Lord appeared unto him, and there were horns (*i.e.*, rays of light) on his face. But this splendour of Moses came from without; but the glory of Christ from within, *i.e.*, from His soul and Deity.

*And was transfigured,* &c. Greek, μετεμορφώθη, i.e., *was transformed.* So also the Syriac. The Arabic is, *He showed His glory in their presence.*

You will inquire after what manner Christ was transfigured? I take it for granted that nothing was done here in a fanciful or fantastic manner, or in the way of illusion. There could be nothing of this sort in Christ.

I say, then, in the first place—Christ did not transfigure Himself before His three Apostles to manifest His Divinity to them, as He does to the saints in Heaven; for It cannot be beheld by any means with eyes of flesh. So the Fathers, *passim.* Wherefore Tertullian, SS. Chrysostom, Leo, and Damascene (who seem to speak otherwise) only mean to say that Christ showed His Apostles the external glory of His body, which was an index of His Divinity; that by it, as through a chink, they might in some sort behold the glory and majesty of His Godhead, even though veiled by the body.

2. Christ in His transfiguration did not change the essential form, fashion, colour, or other qualities of His countenance, but—as Euthymius rightly observes—He assumed a marvellous and, as it were, Divine splendour, so that He shone like the sun, yea with even greater and more august glory. Wherefore Matthew, explaining the expression *He was transfigured,* subjoins, *and his face did shine*

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*like the sun.* And Luke, *The fashion of His countenance was altered, i.e.*, was bright and luminous. (*See S. Thomas* 3, *p. q.* 45.) By transfiguration, therefore, is meant that Christ transformed the external appearance of His face into a more glorious and august one. For Christ did not upon this occasion assume the other endowments of a glorified body—such as impassibility, swiftness, and so on—but of glory only.

Here observe, in the first place, that this glory of Christ pertained not only to His face, but to His hands also and His whole body, as S. Jerome clearly teaches (*Epist.* 61, *ad Pammach.*). For although Abulensis and others think that only the face of Christ shone, since Matthew and Mark make mention only of it, it is better to understand that the entire Body of Christ was resplendent, because it was a full and perfect transfiguration. Whence the glory passed to His raiment. So S. Ephrem (*Orat. de Transfig.*): "His raiment became white. Verily the Evangelist shows that the glory emanated from His whole body, and rays of glory shone from all His members." S. Augustine (*lib.* 3 *de Mirabil. S. Script. c.* 10) says: "As the Divinity shone outwardly through the flesh, so also the flesh, being illuminated by the Divinity, was radiant through His garments." This is the opinion also of S. Ambrose (*in Symb. c.* 22), Origen (*in cap.* ix. *Levit.*), Barradi, Suarez, and others; some of whom think that this splendour penetrated Christ's whole body and rendered it translucent. But others, with greater probability, think that the glory pertained only to the superficies of His Body; and that that is the meaning of the word *Transfiguration*—that is, a a change of the *figure*, which has to do with what is external. This splendour was celestial, yea more than celestial; it was divine and beatific, such as belongs to glorified bodies. Wherefore it was golden and glorious, like the sun; but yet it gave refreshment to the eyes, and did not take away the sight of Christ from His Apostles. In this it was different from the light of the sun.

Note, secondly, that this splendour, as well as the other gifts of a glorified body, appertained to the body of Christ throughout the whole time of His life, from the very moment of His Conception.

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Nevertheless, in order that Christ might suffer and have His conversation among men, this glory and all the other gifts which I have spoken of were held back, as it were, in the beatified soul of Christ, so that it did not infuse them into His body by means of a physical emanation. Otherwise they would have shone through His body, like light through a lantern. This repression, therefore, was a miracle. And the cessation of this repression in the transfiguration, and emanation of the interior splendour into the body of Christ was the cessation of a miracle. But to men it seemed to be a miracle, because it was new, and they were ignorant of the cause. Wherefore Christ possessed this glory of His body by a double right, namely, in right of the Hypostatic Union, and also by the title of merit. For by so many sufferings and labours He merited this glory of His body, and at His resurrection He received it in perpetuity, as theologians teach, *passim.* Wherefore what some persons have thought—that Christ always possessed this glory and these gifts in His body, but that they were not visible to men on account of the infirmity of human sight; even as some say the glory of the bodies of the blessed would be invisible to the eyes of mortals, unless some new power of sight were given them—this opinion, I say, is not probable, because that light of the glorified body is corporeal, and therefore, in a higher degree, visible to the eyes of all.

Lastly the Transfiguration happened on the 6th of August, on which day the Church commemorates it. Ammonius, Baronius, Jansen, Suarez, and others, agree that it took place in the thirty-third year of Christ's life, which was the third and last of His preaching.

You will ask in the second place, why Christ was transfigured? I answer: 1, that by means of this glory and brightness, and by the testimony of Elias and Moses He might prove His Divinity to His Apostles. 2. That he might forewarn His disciples not to lose confidence, when they should behold Him nailed to the cross. 3. That He might indicate that He shall come after this manner with great power and majesty to judge the world. So S. Ephrem, Cyril, and Damascene, S. Basil (*in Psalm* 45), and others. Wherefore also Elias

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appeared, who will be the precursor of Christ when He comes to judgment. 4. That He might animate the faith and hope and courage and zeal of the Apostles and the rest of the faithful bravely to undergo all crosses for the sake of the Gospel through the hope of obtaining the like glory at the resurrection. Thus S. Leo says, "The Lord was transfigured, that He might take away the scandal of the cross from the hearts of His disciples." And S. Chrysostom adds, that the least of the blessed in Heaven has greater brightness and glory than Christ had at His Transfiguration; because Christ attempered His glory to feeble eyes and the capacity of the, as yet, mortal Apostles. They whom the truth of the celestial glory irradiates count as utterly worthless all the pomps and vanities of this world. Wherefore S. Francis was wont to say, "So great is the glory which I expect, that every kind of affliction is delightful to me."

*Symbolically:* This Transfiguration represents the varied and wonderful transformations of the WORD incarnate, as it were a Divine Proteus. For Christ was four times transfigured. First in His Incarnation, when the WORD being made flesh, shone in it as a light in a lantern. 2. On the Cross, on which He was so *deformed* with stripes and nails and spitting, that as Isaiah says, "He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we saw Him, He had no beauty." (c. liii.) 3. In the Resurrection, when He was crowned with glory and honour. 4. In the Eucharist, where he lies hid under the forms of bread and wine, and seems to be, as it were, transfigured into them. For transubstantiation is a sort of transfiguration of the accidents.

*Anagogically:* Christ here wished to give a representation of our resurrection glory, when He will re-fashion our bodies to be like unto the body of His glory.

*Tropologically*: Christ wished, in the first place, to give a type of the transfiguration of a soul dark with sins into that light of grace by which we are made like unto Christ. For our transfiguration standeth in likeness, or configuration unto Christ; that we should be conformed unto Christ in all humility, charity and obedience; that we should

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be living images of the life and holiness of Christ; that we should think, speak, and act with such piety, gravity, and zeal as Christ did; that whosoever sees us should think that he beholds Christ in us. Again Christ here gives a representation of the transfiguration by which a soul passes from a lower degree of holiness to a higher degree. For Christ who was already holy was transfigured. This transfiguration is more infrequent and more difficult than the former. For Saints often flatter themselves on account of their sanctity, and as it were rest in it, and do not aspire to higher sanctity, as sinners and penitents aspire to righteousness. It is less frequently, says a Father, that any one is transfigured from less to greater sanctity, than from sin to holiness. It can only take place in the mountain, and by going aside with Christ, that is to say, by frequent and fervent prayer and meditation. For in them the mind is illuminated by God, and draws as through a pipe celestial light, by means of which it conceives fresh ardour to reform its ways, yea to be transformed into Christ, that with S. Paul it may say, "The world is crucified unto me. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And with S. Francis, it would imprint the five wounds of Christ, if not in its body, yet in the inmost recesses of its soul.

Prayer, then, is the transfiguration of the soul. 1. Because in it the soul receives light from God, that she may know Him and herself and all things more clearly.

2. By it the soul seeks and obtains grace to blot out the stains and vices by which she is deformed. In it she receives consolation for desolation; out of weakness she is made strong; from slothful she becomes fervent; for perplexity, she hath understanding; for sadness, gladness; and for cowardice, courage.

3. She is raised above herself, and is lifted up to God in heaven, where she learns and sees that all the things of earth are fragile and worthless, so that from her lofty height she looks down upon them as fit only for children, She perceives that the true riches, honours, and pleasures are nowhere but in heaven.

4. In prayer she unites herself to God. For, "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (1. Cor. vi. 17.) Hence S. Francis, when

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he prayed, was lifted up on high, and could speak, think of and love nothing else save God. "My God and all," he was wont to say, "Grant me, O Lord, to die for love of Thy love, Thou who didst deign to die for love of my love!" This is what S. Paul says, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2. Cor. iii. 18.)

Lastly, Mark intimates that Christ was not sitting, nor kneeling, but standing, when He was transfigured: *When they awoke, they beheld His glory, and two men standing with Him* who was standing likewise. Hence it follows that Christ was not lifted up into the air, as some painters represent Him, but was transfigured as He stood upon His feet.

*His raiment became white*—some read, *as the light*: thus the Greek, ὡς τὸ φῶς. Thus also the Syriac and the Arabic. The Egyptian has, *His face shone gloriously like the sun; His raiment also was resplendent after the fashion of the sun.* The Ethiopic has, *His garments were like crystal.* But the Vulg. reads with the Persian ὡς Χιών, *like snow.* This is the reading of some Gr. MSS. in this place, and of all in Mark ix. 3. For snow is properly said to be *white*, and light, *shining*: although snow not only is white, but also shines. Abulensis (*quest.* 42 *et seq.*) is of opinion that this brightness of Christ's raiment was a true and real property: and that therefore the colour of His garments was changed, in such manner that if they were previously black, they were made white, and if they were previously white, they became whiter still: and that when the transfiguration was over they returned to their former condition.

S. Mark's words seem in favour of this opinion, *And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them.*

Christ's garments therefore had two properties; namely a snow-like whiteness like a fuller's, and a supernatural splendour bestowed upon them by God. The far more general opinion is that the whiteness was identical with the brightness. For brightness is white, but it adds splendour to the whiteness. And this refulgence, by the opera-

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tion of God, flowed forth as it were from the flesh of Christ into His garments, and thus prevailed over, and as it were swallowed up their natural colour, if it were not white originally. Wherefore this glory in the face and the body of Christ was golden and shining, as in the sun. And when it was transfused to His clothes, it became white, as the moon appears to be white, when illuminated by the sun's rays. And the sun itself appears white, when it shines through clouds. Thus Tertullian (*lib.* iv. *cont. Marc. c.* 22.) So S. Ephrem, and many others. We shall get a full and adequate meaning by uniting both opinions, and say that the garments of Christ were indeed made white, through that snowlike whiteness which God now bestowed upon them, and that they were likewise resplendent through the brightness infused into them by means of the radiant face and flesh of Christ. For this is what Luke means when he says, *His raiment was white and glistening.* Gr. ἐξαστράπτων, *i.e.*, *like lightning, darting rays like lightning.* Whence it is plain that there was in the garments of Christ not only whiteness like snow, but a brightness like lightning. For white is the most perfect colour; and light, or splendour is the most noble of all sensible qualities; and lightning has the nature of fire, and is the most penetrating of all things.

*Tropologically:* the garments of Christ are the Saints. They adorn Him like clothes: and like snow they are chaste and shine through their purity.

*And behold there appeared,* &c. You will ask why these two appeared, rather than any of the other prophets? Maldonatus answers, because these two shall precede Christ's second Advent to Judgment, when He shall come in His glorious Majesty, of which the Transfiguration was a type. This is true with respect to Elias, but wrong with regard to Moses, as I have shown on Rev. xi. 3 and 4, where I have proved that Enoch, not Moses shall come with Elias against Antichrist.

I say then, that the reason was because Moses was the legislator of the Old Law, and Elias was the prince of the Prophets. Wherefore he represents the whole choir of the Prophets. These two appeared then, that they might show that Christ was the true Messiah,

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the Saviour of the world promised by the Law and the Prophets. By Moses the Law is shown to end in Christ, and prophecy by Elias; and that both had accomplished their work, and had given place to Christ as the new Lawgiver and Prophet sent from God, and promised by all the Prophets, but especially by Moses, in those words, "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up from the midst of your brethren, like unto me: and I will put My words in His mouth." (Deut. xviii. 18.) Thus SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, Ambrose. S. Jerome adds that Moses and Elias were blessed with this vision, because like Christ they had fasted forty days and forty nights. Hence Tertullian, Origen, Nazianzen and others think this vision of Christ's Humanity in the transfiguration was represented and promised to Elias when God manifested Himself to him by the breath of a gentle gale (1 Kings xix. 12 *Vulg.*), and to Moses, when he asked to see God's face, and God said to him, "Thou shalt see My back parts, but My Face thou canst not see." (Exodus xxxiii. 23.) This cannot be true in a literal, but only in a symbolical sense.

S. Thomas (3 *p. quæst.* 45, *art.* 3, *ad* 2) gives six other reasons: 1. Because the multitudes said that He was Elias, or Jeremias, or one of the Prophets, He took the chief of the Prophets with Him, that he might declare the difference between the Master and the servants. 2. Because Moses gave the Law, and Elias was jealous for the glory of the Lord: since therefore they appeared with Christ, they excluded the calumny of the Jews, that Christ was a blasphemer of the Law, and that He usurped to Himself the glory of God. 3. He showed that He had the power of life and death, and is the Judge of quick and dead, because He had with Him Moses who was dead and Elias who was yet alive. 4. Because, as Luke says, *they spake of his decease*, that is, of His Passion and Death. Therefore that He might, in reference to this, strengthen the minds of His disciples, He brings before them those who had exposed themselves to death for God's sake. For Moses presented himself before Pharaoh at the peril of his life, as Elias did before Ahab. 5. Because He wished His disciples to imitate the meekness of Moses and the zeal of Elias. 6. Because He would show that He was preached both by the Law and the Prophets.

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You will ask—how and in what manner did Moses and Elias appear? It is agreed by all that it was Elias himself who appeared in his own body. For Elias was taken up to Heaven in a chariot of fire, and is still alive, that he may come again and contend with Antichrist. From Paradise, therefore, or from the place to which he was translated, he was suddenly transferred by an angel to Mount Tabor, that he might converse with Christ in His Transfiguration. With respect to Moses there are various opinions which I have reviewed on the last chapter of Deuteronomy. It is certain, as I have there shown, that Moses is dead, and has not as yet risen again. Some think that this was not Moses who really appeared, but an angel in the form of Moses. But this is certainly an error, says Suarez, because Moses is introduced as a witness of Christ; and a witness must bear testimony in his own person. None therefore of the expositors say that this was not Moses but an angel, except the *Gloss* on Luke ix. 30, which S. Thomas thinks is taken from the author of *The Miracles of Scripture* (*lib.* 3, *caps.* 10 & 13). Jansen thinks it more probable that this *Gloss* is derived from S. Augustine (*lib. de cura pro mortuis*), where S. Augustine expresses himself as doubtful whether the apparitions of the departed take place by themselves appearing, or by means of angels; or rather, as he says, in both ways. But he expresses no doubt as to the appearance of Moses in this place. Yea, even Calvin, although he says it is probable that this was the spectre of Moses, adds that it is more probable that it was the real soul of Moses. The soul then of Moses was translated from Limbus by an angel to the earth. And when Moses was arrived thither, he came to Tabor to Christ, and assumed a body, either formed by an angel out of air, as Lyra, Salmeron, and S. Thomas think, or else resumed his own body, so that he rose again. And thus the soul of Moses was led by an angel to his sepulchre, and there his ashes were collected by the angel and formed into a body, to which the power of God re-united his soul. And thus it was the true and living Moses, whom the angel transferred from his sepulchre to Mount Tabor. For it was meet that in witnessing to Christ, everything should be real and solid, and that Christ by thus



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raising up Moses should show that He is both the Lord and the Judge of the quick and the dead. This is the opinion of Tertullian, Origen, Irenæus, and others; whom Suarez cites and follows (3 *p. q.* 45, *disp.* 22, *sect.* 2). If you follow this opinion, and suppose that Moses rose again, you must suppose that he again died, and that he again rose with others after the Resurrection of Christ. For Christ was the first of all who arose unto the life immortal.

Observe, Christ communicated His glory and splendour to Moses and Elias. Wherefore Luke says, *Moses and Elias were seen in glory.*

*Talking with Him:* Luke adds, *and spake of His decease.* The Greek for *decease* is not ἔκστασις (as though the ecstatic love of Christ, which drove Him to the cross, were signified, as some pious people have thought), but ἔξοδος, i.e., *going forth*—namely, from Jerusalem, and from this life, by the death of the cross on Mount Calvary. This Moses and Elias here foretold to Christ in the hearing of the Apostles, that they might take away, both from them and us, the offence of the cross. Thus it is that some—with S. Chrysostom—instead of ἔξοδον read δόξαν, *i.e.*, glory; for on the cross Christ chiefly manifested His power and glory. Wherefore at that time the sun was darkened, the rocks rent, the earth quaked.

*Peter answered . . . . it is good* (that is, *pleasant, sweet, and blessed*), &c. Peter here—exulting in the glory and, as it were, intoxicated—desired to abide in it, and enjoy it always; whence the Arabic translates, *it is good that we should remain here.* Damascene well observes, "It is not good for thee, O Peter, that Christ should tarry there: if He did, thou wouldst not obtain the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, nor would death have been abolished. Seek not felicity before the time, as Adam sought to be a god."

Theophylact remarks, We must not say with Peter, *it is good for us to be here,* since we ought ever to be going forward, and not remain in one degree of virtue and contemplation, but we ought to pass on to others.

You will ask how Peter knew that the two persons who were talking with Jesus were Moses and Elias? I answer, first, that he might

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have recognised them from what they said. For Moses seems to have said to Christ—Hail, Messiah, our Saviour! Thou art He Whose Passion I prefigured by so many sacrifices, especially by the slain Lamb and the Passover. Elias may have said, Thou art He Whose resurrection I set forth by the widow's son whom I recalled to life, and Whose ascension I prefigured when I was caught up to Heaven in a chariot of fire.—It may be also, that Christ addressed them by their names.

2. Peter might have recognised them by their appearance and dress, as they were described in Scripture and the tradition of the elders. Thus, Elias might be known by his leathern girdle and sheepskin, wherewith he was wont to be clothed. Moses might be known by his horned face. Indeed, if we can believe Origen, Moses appeared with the tables of the Law, Elias with a chariot of fire.

3, and most probably, Peter knew them by Divine inspiration. You will ask why Peter desired that these three tabernacles should be made, since the blessed do not need tabernacles? I reply, Peter said this towards the close of the Transfiguration, when Moses and Elias were about to depart, in order that he might detain them. For Luke says, *And it came to pass as they were departing from Him, Peter said*, &c.; as though he said, "O how sweet and delectable it is to abide in this vision! Wherefore, O Christ, suffer not Moses and Elias to go away; and that we may keep them, let us make them a habitation, a tabernacle for each, in which they may abide." It was for them, not for himself and James and John, he wished the tabernacles to be made. Mark adds, *for he knew not what he said.* It was as though Peter being inebriated with the sweetness of this vision, in order that he might prolong it, spoke, as if bereft of reason, things incongruous. He was in a sort of delirium. And that, first, because he thought Christ in His glory, as well as Moses and Elias, needed tabernacles, and three of them, as though one would not have sufficed. Again, he put Moses and Elias on an equality with Christ. 2. Because he wished Christ to remain on Tabor, and to shut up Him who is the good of the universe on this mountain.



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3. Because, being as yet subject to death and suffering, he desired to enjoy with James and John alone that blessedness to which God, through Christ, designed to bring an innumerable multitude after this life. 4. Because he wished to have glory before labour, a crown before the battle, joy before the cross, when it behoved Christ and Christians first to suffer, and so to enter into their glory. For the cross is the way and the ladder to happiness. 5. Because he placed his happiness in the sight of the glorified Humanity of Christ, not in the vision of the Godhead. If, therefore, Peter had beheld the glory of the Divinity and the abyss of all joy and all goodness, what would he have said? For this vision and pleasure of Peter were sensible and corporeal, and were only like a single crumb or drop in comparison with the joy and pleasure, which the blessed experience in beholding God, when they immerse themselves in Him as in a sea of delight, and are swallowed up in it, according to those words of the thirty-sixth Psalm: "They shall be inebriated from the fatness of Thine house, and Thou shalt give them to drink of the torrent of pleasure." Moreover, this vision of the glory of Christ, of Moses, and of Elias raised in the disciples not only vast pleasure, but wonder and reverence likewise, and a kind of sacred dread. Wherefore Mark says, *they were sore afraid.*

*While he was yet speaking.* Observe Luke has, *while he was yet speaking, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they feared as they entered into the cloud.* Which Toletus explains thus: Whilst Peter is saying *Let us make here three tabernacles*, the cloud (contradicting him) interposed between Christ, Moses, and Elias on the one part, and the disciples on the other, and thus *overshadowed them*—that is to say, the disciples; and the glory of Christ, dazzling the eyes of the disciples, was tempered by the intervention of this cloud, so that He could be more easily seen by them. *And they*—*i.e.*, the disciples—*feared when they entered into the cloud; i.e.*, when they beheld the cloud embracing Christ and Moses and Elias, and themselves shut off from them by the cloud. *They feared*, I say, because they saw that they were on the outside of the cloud, and because they were alone, and there was no one to defend them in case any

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evil should befall them. Or else *they feared* lest Christ and Moses and Elias should go somewhere else, or lest He should be carried away from them into Heaven, as Elias had been carried away in his chariot of fire.

2. Barradi thinks that the cloud came *after* the departure of Moses and Elias, for Luke had previously said concerning them (verse 33), *And it came to pass as they departed from Him, Peter said,* &c. After that, *the cloud overshadowed them, i.e.,* Christ and the disciples, who were left alone. And *they feared,* because they saw themselves *entering into the cloud,* girt round about with it, and they did not know what was about to happen to them.

Instead of, *as they entered into the cloud* (Luke ix. 34), the Syriac translates, *when they saw Moses and Elias,* who were *entering into the cloud.* And instead of, *as they departed from Him,* the Arabic has, *and when they wished to go away from Him.*

You will ask, from whence, and why was this cloud? The answer is, it was made by God through the instrumentality of an angel, by the condensation of air and vapour, that by it he might correct Peter's wish concerning the three tabernacles, by showing that Christ had no need of such things, forasmuch as His throne is a light and glorious cloud. Wherefore it is more probable that, as Franc. Lucas thinks, Peter, James, and John were within, not on the outside of this cloud: for the disciples were near to Christ and were His house and family. And for this very reason were these three Apostles brought up to the top of Tabor, that they might be sure witnesses to the rest of the Apostles and to the faithful what things were done in the cloud round about Christ; and especially might bear testimony to God the Father's voice, *This is my Son.* Therefore it was meet that they should see and hear all those things plainly and visibly, without a veil, or cloud, so that they might be eye and ear witnesses, above all suspicion of possibility of having been deceived, or mistaken. Moreover, the cloud is not only the veil, but the symbol of the glory of God. Hence of old time God was wont to manifest His incomprehensible majesty to the Hebrews, as is plain from Exod. xix. 9, and other passages. Wherefore the cloud is called the Ascen-

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tion, or the chariot of God (Psalm civ. 3): also His tabernacle, His throne, and the seat not only of His majesty, but of the omnipotence of God, and the supreme power of His working. For from the clouds He hurls against His enemies hailstones and whirlwinds, thunderings and lightnings. (Psalm xviii. 12, &c.) Hence also when Christ shall come to judge the world, He will come in the clouds of Heaven. This cloud therefore was as it were an instrument for the voice of God the Father; an ornament and grace for Jesus Christ: and for the Apostles a covert.

Moreover with reference to this cloud, Toletus is of opinion that Christ was transfigured in the night, during the time of sleep. And this was why, as Luke says, *the eyes of the Apostles were heavy:* therefore too Christ's transfiguration appeared the more wonderful. For so great splendour is more marvellous by night than it would be by day. But others with greater probability, think Christ was transfigured at the dawning of the day. They assign two reasons: first that what was done might not seem to be the work of magic or nocturnal spectres. Secondly, because Christ came for works of light: and the eyes of the Apostles were heavy on account of fatigue. Lastly, the dawn is on the confines between light and darkness. It is a delightful hour, and so the symbol of glory.

The cloud was bright, 1. As an indication of the glory of Christ. Whence Cajetan thinks that this cloud derived its brightness from the light and glory of the body of Christ; or better, because by it was represented the glory and majesty of the Father whose voice was heard. Whence Peter calls this cloud (2 Peter i. 17) the *excellent glory* of the Father, Who spake out of it; and Who by means of it increased the glory of the transfiguration of Christ. This cloud therefore was full of majesty and glory.

2. For the signification of the difference between the Old Law and the New. In the Old Law, God appeared to the Jews in a black cloud, because that Law was full of shadows and terrors. In the New Law, He appears in a bright cloud, because the New Law brings truth, glory and love. So S. Chrysostom, Theophylact and Damascene *On the Transfiguration.*

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*And behold a Voice*, &c. The Voice, namely, of God the Father to Christ. Observe, 1., with S. Chrysostom, Ambrose, Toletus, and others, that it is plain from Luke ix. 34 *et seq.* that this voice sounded from a cloud high above the earth. Wherefore S. Peter in his Epistle speaks of it as coming from heaven. It must have come *after* the departure of Moses and Elias. And with this object, that it might be perfectly clear and certain to the Apostles that this voice was addressed to Christ alone, and not to Moses, or Elias, who had now gone away, Inasmuch as this voice was a work, *ad extra*, to use the expression employed by theologians, it proceeded from the whole Trinity. The voice was formed by an angel, since God makes use of His angels for these exterior works.

Observe. 2. That in this transfiguration, equally as in the Baptism of Christ, the Trinity was symbolically represented. The Holy Ghost was represented by the cloud, the Father by the voice, the Son by the Divine glory and brightness, by which likewise was set forth the Incarnation of the WORD. For Christ was seen as man, and by the splendour and the voice of God the Father it was signified that He was also God. The Holy Ghost was adumbrated by the cloud, because He, like a bright cloud, enlightens man, protects him, and makes him fruitful to every good work. He also blesses and glorifies. Hence in the Baptism of Christ, the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove, because in Baptism He gives innocence. But in the Transfiguration, which is a type of the resurrection, He came under the appearance of a cloud, because He gave then, and will give in the resurrection security from all evils.

*This is My beloved Son*: "Two pleasant words," says S. Cyprian (*de Baptismo*), "*Son* and *Beloved*, coming from the mouth of God, are impressed upon our senses, that the association of names may unite us in the community of gifts, and such great names of sweetness may soften our minds, and kindle the ardour of devotion." Moreover, "God the Father said not, 'in this is My Son,' lest One from Another being placed apart, they should be supposed to be divided: but that according to the dispensation of Their union

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They should be simply taken to be One and the same," says the Council of Ephesus (*ex prosphonet. Cyril Imperator*).

*Beloved*, Syriac, *most Beloved*. There is an allusion to Ps. xxix. 4. "The voice of the Lord is in magnificence, &c., and beloved as a son of the unicorns." I have explained the various analogies between Christ and a unicorn on 2 Pet. i. 17.

*Hear him*, not Moses, who has gone away, but Christ, as the new legislator of the New Law. These words, *hear Him* were not said of Christ at His Baptism, because He was then for the first time shown to the world; but now He is set forth as a Teacher and Lawgiver. Therefore (as Tertullian, S. Leo, Damascene, and others maintain) these words denote the abrogation of the Old Law, and the inauguration of the New.

*And when the disciples heard*, &c. 1. Because this cloud seemed to them to portend something new, strange, and Divine. 2. Because (as the Syriac has) they beheld Moses and Elias going away and entering into the cloud, and through it vanishing from their sight. 3. They were afraid when they heard the voice, because (as Abulensis says) it was as loud as thunder; and though it was a sweet voice, yet its echoing reverberation terrified them. Thus, too, S. Ephrem says: "At the sound of this voice the Apostles fell flat upon the earth; for terrible was the thunder, and the voice shook the earth." And S. Jerome says: "Human weakness cannot sustain to bear the sight of this great glory; trembling both in mind and body, it falls to the ground." Origen, S. Chrysostom, and Euthymius add—that being struck with fear they fell upon their faces, that they might worship God, and make supplication unto Him that the thunder and lightning might not strike them.

*When they lifted up their eyes*, &c. This signified symbolically that the Law and the Prophets had disappeared now that Christ was present, and that He Who brought to men the true light of the Gospel alone remained. Again: this glory and delight of the Transfiguration quickly passed away, but Christ would show that all things in this world—even those that are lofty and divine—are transient, but that in Heaven they will be eternal, so that we may pant after

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it; for on earth all things are measured by time, but in Heaven they possess an enduring eternity.

Note: SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke relate the history of the Transfiguration differently; but the following is a series and order of circumstances, which will reconcile the Evangelists one with another. 1. Christ prayed. In the meantime the disciples, being heavy with sleep, from the fatigue of ascending the mountain and the length of Christ's prayer, whilst they were sleeping, He was transfigured 2. Moses and Elias came, and talked with Christ concerning His death upon the cross, which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. 3. The Apostles, being roused from sleep by the brightness and the talking, beheld the glory of Christ, and Moses and Elias conversing with Him. 4. When their conversation was ended, and they made as though they were going away, Peter being (as it were) inebriated with pleasure and grieving at their departure, sought to make three tabernacles. 5. There came the cloud, obscuring Moses and Elias; and then the voice speaking to Christ, *This is My beloved Son*, when the Apostles, being affrighted, fell to the earth; and were presently comforted and raised up by Christ; and, lifting up their eyes, saw Jesus alone.

*And as they were coming down*, &c.—*to no one.* Not only to the people, as S. Jerome says, but not even to the other Apostles; that they might not give them an occasion of sorrow or envy because they were not present with Peter and James and John at the Transfiguration. So Damascene: "lest the madness of envy should drive the traitor to fury." Whence Mark says, *they kept the matter close between themselves.* The reason why Christ enjoined upon them this silence was, because there would a fitting time come for the revelation of this mystery; and because the Apostles would understand and believe it when—after His Passion and death, in which they would be scandalized and troubled—they were about to behold Him rising again in glory, of which this Transfiguration was a type. For by Christ's resurrection they were about to understand of a surety that Christ underwent the death of the cross for us—not because He was compelled, but voluntarily, out of His exceeding love; and that

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now—being endowed with glory—He will come to judgment at the end of the world, and will crown with the same glory those who (after His example and precept) have denied themselves, have borne the cross, and in following Him have lost their lives for the sake of His love.

*And the disciples asked Him*, &c. The reason of this question was because these three Apostles had seen Elias in the Transfiguration, and had beheld him going away. They marvel, therefore, that he did not remain and become the forerunner of Christ and His glorious kingdom, according to the prophecy of Malachi (iv. 5)—a prophecy quoted and enforced by the Scribes. But they erred, by confusing the times. They did not fully distinguish between Christ's first coming in the flesh and His second Advent in glory. Of this latter Elias will be the precursor, as John the Baptist was of the former. But although the Apostles in some manner distinguished between Christ's first Advent and His second (for the first they had seen, but had not yet seen the second), nevertheless they expected that the latter was nigh at hand. For they had heard Christ speak of His approaching resurrection, a type whereof they had beheld in His Transfiguration; and they thought, although erroneously, that after it Christ would immediately reign gloriously, inaugurating that kingdom of glory which He shall establish at His second Advent. This was why they wondered, and asked why Elias did not remain that he might go before Christ.

*Restore all things:* that is, convert the Jews to Christ as the Messiah promised to themselves and their forefathers. As Malachi says: "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." See what I have there said. Matthew (as is usual with him) follows the LXX, which instead of *turn*, or *convert*, has ἀποκαταστήσει, i.e., *shall restore*. Hence the Arabic translates, *shall teach you all things*.

*But I say unto you*, &c. Christ passes at once from the literal to the mystical Elias, *i.e.*, John the Baptist: for concerning John, the angel Gabriel had foretold to his father Zacharias, in S. Luke: "And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the

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hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (i. 17.)

Falsely do the Calvinists refer all these things to the first Advent of Christ, and explain both mentions of Elias—viz., in verses 11 and 12—to mean John the Baptist. For they think that Elias, whom Malachi predicted shall come as the precursor of Christ (iv. 5), *is* John the Baptist, and that there is no other who shall come with Enoch before Christ's second Advent. I have refuted this error at length on Malachi iv. 5.

For it was Christ's intention in this place only to explain that saying of the scribes, derived from Malachi, "Elias shall come, and shall show you Christ,"—that what Malachi had spoken of Christ's second Advent might be applied mystically to His first. For the Scribes did not distinguish between the two Advents of Christ, even as the Jews fail to do so still. For they deny that Christ has come, and are expecting Him as still about to come, because Elias has not yet appeared to point Him out. Christ therefore, that He might, in His condescension, give a full explanation to the Scribes, concedes that *an* Elias would be a precursor of both His Advents; but that in the first it would be the typical, in the second the literal and real Elias. And He means to say that it was not because Elias had not yet come that the Jews persisted in not believing Him to be the Messiah, but because they were perverse and obstinate in their wickedness. For that Elias, who had been promised before Christ's first Advent, namely John the Baptist, had already come, and had already pointed out Christ to the Scribes, that He was the Messiah; and they would not believe him. Therefore Christ adds, *and they knew him not, i.e.*, they refused to recognize him, as the precursor of Christ. *And they did unto him whatsoever they listed, i.e.*, when he reproved their vices, they hated and persecuted him, and delivered him up to Herod, who sought his life.

*Then understood*, &c. Viz., that John the Baptist was the mystical Elias, and the forerunner of Christ.

*And when He was come*, &c. Luke adds, *and it came to pass on*

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*the following day, when He was coming down from the mount*, &c. From this it is plain that this lunatic was cured on the day following the Transfiguration.

*A lunatic*, Gr. σεληνιαζεται, that is at the changes of the moon, at new and full moon he suffers from epilepsy, not from any natural cause, but because he is beset by a devil. The Arabic has, *he is grievously vexed at the time of the new moon.* Whence Mark has (ix. 17): "And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit: And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth and pineth away," as is common in epilepsy. And Luke (ix. 39): "I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him." Hence Origen, SS. Chrysostom and Jerome teach that the ordinary epilepsy is not to be ascribed so much to the moon and the state of the humours of the body, as to the devil, who makes use of the changes of the moon and vicious secretions. Mahomet, who suffered from epilepsy, pretended that he was seized and influenced by the Holy Ghost, when he was really possessed by Satan. For this reason too the Turks venerate persons suffering from epilepsy, as though they were under the influence of the Holy Ghost, and were prophets. When the moon is new and at the full, she increases and agitates the humours, especially the melancholic and phlegmatic humours of the brain, over which she has power. And she so acts upon them that they disturb the brain, and cause noises, spittings, and agitation of the whole body. For they who are afflicted with mania and epilepsy, are especially troubled with black bile, that is melancholy, at the time of full moon, because then the moon brings more light and heat, though weaker than those of the sun. But the sun sets free, and puts into motion the black bile, though it does not consume it. The black bile when set in motion, will produce these foamings, and noises, and gnashing of the teeth. And epileptic patients, on account of the phlegm and crude humours, are afflicted when the moon is waning, but especially at the new moon, because

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then the moon has less light and heat. And phlegm and phlegmatic humours are intensified by cold, especially when it becomes excessive.

*I brought him*, &c. After the manner of men, he ascribes to the Apostles what was the fault of his own want of faith.

*O faithless generation*, &c. Origen thinks these words were addressed to the nine Apostles who remained below, when Christ took the other three with Him to the top of Tabor. He thinks that, as far as these nine were concerned, faith was weak. As S. Hilary says, "Whilst Christ had gone up upon the mountain with three of the Apostles, a kind of torpor of faith crept over the remaining nine, who were left with the people, both because they heard from the father of the lunatic, and saw with their own eyes the magnitude of the evil, and the violence and raging madness of the demon within him." But, with greater probability, SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, and Theophylact think these words were spoken to the father of the lunatic, and to the Jews and Scribes. For in them was greater incredulity, and by consequence they were more to blame that the devil was not cast out, than the disciples were. This may be gathered from Mark ix. 24, when the father, being asked by Christ if he believed in Him, answered: *Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.* Nevertheless, Christ privately rebukes the Apostles (V. 20), because they had less faith than there was need of in so great a work. To the Jews, therefore, Christ said, *O faithless and perverse generation.* And Christ goes on to tell them that the reason why His disciples could not heal the child was not any want of power either on His part or on theirs. It was as though He said to the father of the child, "I have given them power to cast out devils, but the obstacle is thine own unbelief and that of the Jews, which oppose the grace of God; because thou dost not believe, but doubtest whether I and they are able to heal him." Thus S. Cyril. "The words of Christ," says S. Jerome, "are like those of a physician, who should see a patient acting contrary to his orders. He would say, 'How long shall I keep coming to your house? How long shall I have my trouble for nothing, whilst I order one

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thing and you do the contrary?' But it was not so much that He was angry with the man, as with his fault, and that in the person of one man He reproved the Jews for their unbelief, since he added immediately, '*bring him to Me.*'"

*Bring him*, &c. Mark adds (ix. 20), "And they brought him unto Him: and when he saw Him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming." "After the demon perceived the Lord, he convulses the child," says Titus of Bosra, "because, being angry at the presence of Jesus, and fearing Him, lest he should be driven out, he began to rage, and horribly to vex and torment the lunatic." Mark proceeds, "And He asked his father how long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, 'Of a child. And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if Thou canst do anything' [*If Thou canst.* See the incredulity which Christ reproved, for he doubted Christ's power], 'have compassion on us, and help us.' Jesus said unto him, 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.'" By believing in Me thou mayest obtain the healing of thy child. Suitably did Christ require that he should have faith in Him. It was not fitting that he should heal those who did not believe in Him, or that He should thrust His benefits upon those who turned away from Him. Mark proceeds, "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.'" That is, *I believe*, but I am weak in faith, do Thou increase and strengthen it, that whatsoever there is in me of doubt and unbelief may be taken away. We cannot doubt that Christ did hear such humble and such fervent prayers, and did take away from him all unbelief; for by and bye He healed the child, as the child of one believing.

*And Jesus rebuked the devil*, &c. Mark adds: "When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him

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by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose." From all this we see how very powerful and malignant this devil was, who had made the child deaf and dumb, and who dared so to resist Christ, and to bring the lunatic to the very point of death. From hence it seems probable that this demon had belonged originally to one of the superior orders of angels. For they too invade and possess men. This was why Christ's disciples could not cast him out, but his expulsion was reserved for Christ Himself, Who by His mighty power and command drove him forth. This is the meaning of the Greek—ἐπετίμησε, i.e., *He rebuked*, and *with threats commanded* the devil, saying, *I command thee, Come out of him;* and if thou dost not obey, I will punish thee severely. This, too, was why Christ said to His Apostles, when they asked Him why they could not cast him out, *this kind goeth out by nothing save by prayer and fasting.*

*Jesus said*, &c. The Arabic has, *on account of the smallness of your faith.* The Apostles had faith, but to cast out so powerful and fierce a devil greater faith was required than the Apostles possessed: whence the Syriac renders the next verse as follows—*if there had been in you faith*, &c.

*Verily I say unto you*, &c.; *this mountain*—viz., Tabor, from which I am coming down. This is miraculous faith, which is not different from justifying faith, as the heretics maintain, but the same; for there is only one faith (Eph. iv. 5). This faith, however, is united with a sure confidence in God's assistance to perform the miracle which is aimed at. This confidence arises, first from the liberty of a holy conscience, which is familiar with God, which makes use of God as a friend, and penetrates into the treasures of His grace, that it may enjoy them; according to those words of S. John (1 John iii. 21): "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him."

2. From an interior instigation of God, as it were animating men, and stirring them up to such a miraculous work, and tacitly promising them His help to effect it. *Vide* Franc. Saurez, *Tract. de Fide disp.* 8, *sect.* 1, where he teaches that the faith of miracles, as regards its substance and essence, is an act of the Catholic faith, by which

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we believe that God is omnipotent and faithful to His promises, and which is so drawn out and applied to the particular action, that it is able to beget the confidence which is necessary for working the miracle. From whence you may gather, that as this faith and confidence are in our own will and power, with the grace of God which He is wont to give, so also there is to some extent in our power the faculty of working miracles; and the more any one increases in faith and confidence, the more does he increase in this faculty. The more familiar any one is with God, the more gifts does he obtain from Him, and Christ here signifies this; and the same is plain from the lives and actions of the saints. Thus S. Bernard teaches, that we may gain the gift of prophecy, so that we may know the secret things of God, if in truth we cause ourselves to enter into most intimate friendship with God. For of this Christ speaks (John xv. 15): "I have called you friends, for all things which I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."

*Faith, as a grain of mustard seed*, i.e, faith small in appearance, but of great virtue and efficacy; humble faith, which boasteth not itself, and therefore small in man's judgment, but verily quick, perfect, burning like mustard seed. For when such faith is united to humility, it takes away every shadow of unbelief. It works miracles and removes mountains. This faith shone brightly in S. Gregory, Bishop of Neocæsarea; for he, when a mountain stood in the way of his building a church, by his prayers removed it to another place. (See Nyssen in his *Life:* and Eusebius, H. E. 7, 25.) He performed many other miracles, from which he received the name of Thaumaturgus, *i.e.*, wonder-worker. In like manner, a mountain in Tartary was removed by Christians, when a tyrant required such a miracle of them in accordance with this promise of Christ. (See Marco Polo, *On Tartary.*) S. Jerome gives a similar instance in his Life of S. Hilarion. For he, when the sea, through an earthquake, raised vast masses of waters upon the shore—which threatened the city of Epidaurus with destruction—was placed by its citizens upon the shore as a bulwark against the waves. "He drew three figures of the cross on the sand, and stretched forth his hands against the sea

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when it was swelling to a vast height before him, when it stood still; and roaring for a long time, and (as it were) being angry with the bulwark, by degrees it sunk down to its ordinary level. Verily that which was said to the Apostles, *If ye believe, ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou cast into the sea, and it shall be done*, may be fulfilled even to the letter. For what difference is there between a mountain going down into the sea, and immense mountains of waters being suddenly arrested at the feet of an old man?"

*Mystically:* a mountain is severe temptation, especially to ambition and pride, as S. Jerome teaches. Such a temptation is best overcome by faith and hope. Wherefore S. Francis, being troubled by a dreadful temptation in spirit, betaking himself to prayer, with tears, heard a voice from Heaven, saying, "Francis, if thou shalt have faith as a grain of mustard seed, thou shalt command this mountain to pass away, and it shall pass away." He, not knowing what was the meaning of the oracle, cried out, "Lord, what is this mountain?" The answer came, "The mountain is temptation." Then Francis added, with many tears, "O Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word." And immediately all the temptation was removed, and he obtained perfect tranquillity. (Wadding, *in Annal. Minor.* A.D. 1218, *num.* 2.)

*This kind*, &c. Observe first, *this kind* does not mean every kind of demons, as S. Chrysostom thinks, but those of a higher order, which are most powerful, obstinate and malicious, like this one whom Christ here cast out.

Observe secondly. This sort of demons can only be driven out by prayer and fasting; because these two things lift men up from the flesh to God. As S. Chrysostom says, "Fasting is the chief work of the higher philosophy, and places men on a level with angels, and vanquishes the incorporeal powers."

Observe thirdly. Christ does not require prayer and fasting in both the person who works the miracle and in him for whose benefit the miracle is wrought, as S. Chrysostom supposes, but in him only who works the miracle, as Origen has observed. Yet there can be no



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doubt that faith and prayer on the part of the recipient greatly aid in the working of the miracle.

You may say, that it is not said of Christ, when He cast out this devil, that He prayed or fasted. I answer, that He had prayed and fasted a little while before, when He was transfigured on Mount Tabor. Besides, prayer and fasting are required in mere men, not in Christ, who was God, and as God, was able by His word alone to put the devils to flight, yea to annihilate them. So Abulensis.

*While they abode*, &c. Christ reiterates His prophecy concerning His Cross and Passion, which He uttered first at Cæsarea Philippi (xvi. 22), that the disciples might not be affrighted, nor scandalized when the time came, nor fall from faith in Him as the Messiah, because He suffered such a shameful death. For the Cross was an offence to the Apostles, so that they all forsook Him and fled. The Cross therefore needed to be again and again preached to them, and impressed upon them, so that they might know that Christ did not suffer it *because* He was compelled, *but of His own will*, and in obedience to the Father's will; that He might redeem mankind. Moreover He reiterated this preaching of the Cross in Galilee, after He had healed the lunatic when He came down from Tabor, and the Galileans on account of that miracle had given Him great praise and honour, as we may learn from SS. Mark and Luke, in order that He might repress any vain-glorious thoughts which were likely to arise in the minds of the Apostles, by putting them in mind of His Cross and Passion.

*And shall kill Him*, &c. When the Apostles heard speak of Christ being put to death, because they were unwilling that He should die, and that they should be separated from Him by death, He alleviates this their sorrow by adding, *And the third day He shall rise again.* But they did not understand these words of Christ. They were not able to receive them. Whence they were, for a long time, doubtful concerning His resurrection. And this was why Christ by many apparitions and miracles was obliged to convince them that He had really risen again, so that He might root out all doubt from their minds.

*And when they were come*, &c. . . . . *tribute*, the Syriac adds, *poll*

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*tax*, as paid by each individual. *Pay tribute*, the Arabic has, *pay what is due.* The collectors do not make an assertion, but ask a question, because these tax-gatherers were newly in office, or at least had fresh servants, who did not know, or did not remember that in the year which was past, Christ had paid the tribute at Capernaum, as other people did.

*Tribute money:* The Gr. and the Vulg. have *didrachma*, that is, a half shekel, equal in value to two Spanish reals. The shekel weighed four didrachma. See what I have said on Exodus xxx. 13. Baronius and others are of opinion that this didrachma was the sacred half shekel, which was required by the Divine law to be paid to the temple. (Exodus xxx. 13.)

There God ordained that every Israelite male of twenty years old and upward should pay a half shekel for the service of the Sanctuary. This was when a census was taken. But subsequently, the Jews of their own accord, out of devotion, and that they might more entirely fulfil the law, decreed that all should pay this half shekel every year for the sustentation of the Priests and Levites, for repairing the temple, for furnishing victims for the sacrifices, and many other similar purposes. All this is plain from 2 Chron. xxiv. 5, 6, 7: also from Josephus, who shows that the Jews who lived at a distance from the Holy Land were accustomed to collect this sacred didrachma, and send it to the temple at Jerusalem. (Jos. Ant. xviii. 12.)

But the tribute here spoken of was a civil tax, and payable either to the Romans, or to Herod Antipas. This is seen from Christ's words to Peter—*of whom do the kings of the earth take custom, or tribute?* This then was royal tribute, and payable either to a king or an emperor. The same thing is plain from xxii. 21, where the Herodians ask Christ, "whether it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?" The origin of this tribute being levied was a little before the time of Christ, when Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, the grandsons of Simon Maccabæus were contending which should have the high priesthood. Pompey, being called in to arbitrate between them, adjudged it to Hyrcanus: but the people of Jerusalem, who favoured the other can-



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didate, restored it to Aristobulus. After that Pompey took Jerusalem, and reduced Judea to subjection to Rome, and exacted an annual tribute. Moreover because the Jews were accustomed to pay a didrachma to the temple, they were also ordered by the Romans to pay the same sum to them, until after the rebellion, when Jerusalem was besieged and captured by Vespasian, and the temple destroyed, he ordered them to pay that didrachma to the Roman capitol. The Jews greatly disliked paying this tribute to the Romans. They said that they were the people of God, and therefore free; and that they ought to pay tribute to Him, not to Cæsar. This feeling it was which gave rise, about the time of Christ, to the sect of the Galilæans, whose leader was Judas of Galilee, who refused all payment of tribute to Cæsar, and all acknowledgment of his authority. Christ and His Apostles were suspected of belonging to this sect, because they were Galilæans, and were preachers of the new, heavenly kingdom. In order therefore that Christ might show the groundlessness of this imputation, He, on the present occasion, paid the didrachma. So S. Jerome, Bede, Jansen, and others. The collectors of the tribute did not venture to ask Christ Himself for it, on account of the fame of His sanctity and miracles; but they said to Peter, in private, is not your Master accustomed to pay the didrachma?

*He said, yea:* Peter asserted that it was Christ's custom, as he had seen in previous years, always to pay this tribute.

*When He was come into the house*, hired by Christ at Capernaum, as I have said, iv. 13.

*And He said*, &c. Christ being conscious in His spirit of the conversation which had passed between Peter and the tax collectors, *prevented him*, i.e., first asked him about the matter, and showed that He was not under obligation to pay this tribute. *The kings of the earth*, &c. It is an argument from the less to the greater, as S. Chrysostom teaches: in this way, the children of kings, of common right, are free from the tribute paid to kings. Much more therefore am I, together with My Apostles, who are My family; I, I say, who am king of kings, and the true and only begotten Son of God Himself, free

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from every kind of tribute which the kings of the earth impose upon their subjects. So S. Jerome and others.

Wherefore certain Canonists are wrong in gathering from this reasoning of Christ that the clergy, by Divine right, are exempt from all taxes. For by parity of reasoning it might be concluded that all Christians are exempted from payment of taxes, as the Anabaptists assert. For Christians are the adopted children of God, born again in baptism. The falsehood of this idea is shown by the Apostle (Rom. xiii. 7) and the whole Church: for this adoption pertains to a higher order of inheritance, even a Heavenly one. Properly, however, in accordance with these words of Christ, kings and princes have exempted ecclesiastics, who are of the household and family of Christ, from the payment of taxes. And this is all which is meant by S. Jerome and the Canons when they say that the clergy are exempt from taxes, not only by human but Divine right; because, in truth, Divine right intimates that this exemption ought to be conceded. (See Lessius *de Justitia, l. 2, c. 33, dub. 4*, where he shows that the exemption of the clergy from paying taxes is not of Divine but of human right.)

*Nevertheless*, &c. It is as though He said, lest the collectors should be offended, and think we despise Tiberius Cæsar, as a Gentile, and reject his authority, like Judas of Galilee. *Piece of money*, Greek and Vulgate *stater:* this is the same as the Hebrew shekel, namely a pound. For formerly money not stamped was paid by weight. The shekel weighed four drachmæ, which were equivalent to four Spanish reals, or a florin of Brabant. Observe, Christ here afforded an example of justice, humility and obedience, and taught that Christianity is not opposed to civil government, but is rather an aid and advantage to it.

*For Me and thee.* You will ask why Christ only paid this tribute for Himself and Peter? I answer, He did not pay for the rest of the disciples, either because, as Lyra thinks, only the heads of families were bound to pay this tribute, or because the disciples of Christ were poor men. Wherefore Christ tacitly desired that they should be excused by the tax gatherers on account of their poverty

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or because they belonged to other places, and had already paid the tribute in those cities. Lastly, Abulensis thinks that for all the Apostles, who had wives and children, and therefore were heads of families, this didrachma was paid out of the common coffer which Judas carried; and that Matthew only related the payment of Christ's didrachma because of the miracle of its being found in the mouth of the fish, that He might show that He was not under an obligation to pay it, nor was subject to Cæsar. For Peter, however, Christ paid, both because Peter was the instrument of the exaction, as well as of the payment, as also because Peter had a house and family at Capernaum. It was also *honoris causa*, to intimate that Peter was the vicar of his Church and household, and destined by him to be the head and prince of the rest of the Apostles. So SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, Origen, and others.

*Moraliter:* Learn from hence Christ's zeal for poverty, that He had not at home so much as one shekel to pay the tribute, but obtained it miraculously from a fish, that he might teach that God by means of fishes and the rest of the creatures provides necessary things for the poor in spirit, as He provided food for Elias by the ministry of ravens.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

1 *Christ warneth his disciples to be humble and harmless:* 7 *to avoid offences, and not to despise the little ones:* 15 *teacheth how we are to deal with our brethren, when they offend us:* 21 *and how oft to forgive them:* 23 *which he setteth forth by a parable of the king, that took account of his servants,* 32 *and punished him, who showed no mercy to his fellow.*

AT the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them.

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 ¶ Woe unto the world because of offences; for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee, it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

12 How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, He rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

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14 Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one o these little ones should perish.

15 Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16 But if he will not hear *thee, then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

21 ¶ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but Until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents;

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

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*At that time came*, &c. There seems to be a discrepancy here with Mark ix. 31, where it is said that the disciples disputed about this matter in the way, and that afterwards, when they were in the house, Christ prevented them, and asked them what they were doing in the way? S. Chrysostom answers that the Apostles had often disputed about this same matter, and at length Christ anticipated them with this question. When, therefore, they saw that their thoughts were known to Christ, they opened the matter to Him of their own accord, and asked him to resolve their question for them. Various things gave rise to these disputations, but the immediate cause was Christ having paid the didrachma for Peter only. Hence they envied him, as preferred to them, and then each began to be anxious that he might be promoted to the first rank. Hear S. Jerome, "Because they saw that the same piece of money had paid the tribute both for the Lord and Peter, from the equality of the payment, they thought Peter was preferred above the rest of the Apostles. Therefore they asked, *who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?* Jesus knowing their thoughts, and understanding the cause of their error, desired to heal their desire of glory by teaching them to contend in humility." Again, they saw that Peter, James and John had been taken apart by Christ on Tabor, and they grieved that they too had not been taken. Lastly, they had heard that Christ was shortly to die, and rise again, and enter into His glorious kingdom, and they prematurely were occupying themselves about these things, and seeking how they might become chiefs.

*The greatest, i.e.*, in the kingdom of Messiah, which the Apostles expected Christ would establish on the earth indeed, though a heavenly and Divine kingdom, that is, in the Church. For the Church Militant on earth is tending towards the Church Triumphant in Heaven, as to the kingdom promised it by Christ. Maldonatus understands the passage as follows: He who is less, *i.e.*, more humble in the Church is greater in the Church, and therefore greater in the kingdom of Heaven. He proves this: 1, from the occasion of this question, because from Christ's having paid the didrachma for Peter, the Apostles conjectured he was to be the future head of the church;

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2, because Christ regarded the question as a mark of ambition: and it it is ambition to seek the first place in the Church, but not in Heaven. Charity persuades us to seek the first places in Heaven. This explanation is probable; but we may understand the passage more simply, by taking *the kingdom of Heaven* to mean literally *Heaven*. The Apostles are charged by Christ with ambition, because they looked upon the kingdom of Heaven like an earthly kingdom, which is often compassed because of pride, and even seized by force of arms.

*And Jesus called a little child*, &c. Mark adds that He took him in His arms. It is thought, says Jansen, that this little boy was S. Martial, who afterwards became a disciple of S. Peter, and was sent by him to preach the Gospel in Gaul, and converted the inhabitants of Limousin, of Toulouse, and Bourdeaux. But others say that S. Martial was one of the seventy-two disciples. He could not, therefore, have been a little child at this time.

*Converted, i.e.*, from this emulation and ambition of yours, which is at least a venial sin, and therefore an impediment to entrance into the kingdom of Heaven.

*As little children:* for, speaking generally, they do not envy others, nor covet precedence, but are simple, humble, innocent, and candid. I say generally, for S. Augustine (*Confess. l.* 1, *c.* 7) testifies that he had seen an infant at its mother's breasts growing pale with envy, because he saw his twin brother sucking at the same breasts. But there is no little child who is ambitious of a kingdom, or of the first place in a kingdom, as the Apostles were.

Christ bids us become like little children. Briefly, and to the point, does S. Hilary sum up their characteristics which ought to be imitated by believers. "They," he says, "follow their father; they love their mother: they wish no evil to their neighbour; they regard not the care of riches; they are not wont to be insolent, nor to hate, nor to tell lies. They believe what they are told; they regard as true what they hear. Let us return, therefore, to the simplicity of little children, for when we have that, we bear about with us a likeness of the Lord's humility."

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The way, therefore, to Heaven is humility; and the entrance and the door of Heaven is humility, because, save through it, there is no access to Heaven. S. Antony saw in spirit the whole world full of gins, and souls who desired to fly to Heaven caught in them, and being thus ensnared by the demons, thrust into hell. He cried out with groans, "O Lord, who shall escape all these snares?" And he heard the answer, "Humility shall escape them all." Christ, that He may cure the ambition of His disciples by a zeal for humility, makes use of three reasons to persuade them. The first is in this verse, in which he declares that none who are devoid of it shall enter Heaven. The second is in the following verse; that humility exalts, and that if you wish to be great in the kingdom of Heaven you must be small and humble on earth. The third is in the fifth verse; that humility is conformity to Christ, Who humbled Himself below the Apostles and all men, Who humbled Himself even unto death. Therefore, whoso receiveth him that is humble receiveth Christ.

*Whoso shall humble himself*, &c., *i.e.*, shall be as humble through virtue as this little child is by nature: or who shall be lowly in mind as he is little in body. Christ then bids us become like little ones, not in want of wisdom but in simplicity and innocence, and directly in humility. Thus the Apostles (1. Cor. xiv. 20). "Brethren be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye men." Origen gives the reason, "A little child has no overweening ideas of himself, and does not boast of rank or riches. We see that infants until their third or fourth year, even if they belong to the nobility, put themselves on an equality with boys of lowly birth, and are as ready to love poor children as rich ones."

*Moraliter*: learn here the paradox of Christian wisdom. If you wish to be great in heaven, desire to be unknown on earth, and to be little among men, to be despised and made of no account If you wish to be raised to the chief thrones in the empyrean, place thyself even below the feet of Judas, as S. Francis Borgia did. For it has been fixed and sanctioned by the eternal law of God, that "whoso exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." There once was seen a lofty and glorious throne among

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the Seraphim, and a voice was heard which said, "This seat is kept for the lowly Francis." So Bonaventura in his life.

Humility is grateful and honourable with God, with angels and with men. Even if you would act upon mere policy, you must embrace humility, because it is in favour with all men. Hence courtiers, be they as ambitious as they may, yet marvellously humble themselves both in word and deed; but because they labour under the secret arrogance of the mind, it is difficult for them not to betray their hauteur from breaking out by some indication in their countenance. S. Jerome, or rather S. Paulinus (*Epist. ad Celant.* 14), says, "You can have nothing more excellent, or more loveable than humility. She is the chief preserver, and as it were the guardian of all virtues. And there is nothing which can make us so pleasing to God and men, as that when we are deservedly great by reason of our life, we should be the lowest by reason of humility." As the Scripture says, "The greater thou art, humble thyself in all things, and thou shalt find favour before God." Moreover S. Jerome says (*Epis.* 45, *ad Anton.*), "Our Lord as a teacher of humility to His disciples, when they were disputing about dignity, took a little child and said, whosoever of you shall not be converted to be like an infant, cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. But that He might appear not only to teach, but also to do, He fulfilled this by His example, when, whilst washing His disciples' feet, He kissed His betrayer; when He conversed with the Samaritan woman; when He talked with Mary sitting at His feet about the kingdom of heaven; when, rising from the dead, He appeared first to the women. But Satan fell from the state of an archangel for no other cause than pride, which is the vice contrary to humility." Humility, therefore, makes man to become an angel, even as pride made an angel become a devil. The first gift which is given to a man from beholding the Divine light is self-knowledge, says S. Denys (*Epist.* 7, *ad Titum*), and this is humility. For humility is a virtue by which a man thinketh vilely of himself through self-knowledge, and reckons himself inferior to all; either because he esteems himself viler, weaker, or more wretched than all, or because he piously thinks others are endowed with

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greater grace and other gifts of God than he is. That is a golden saying of blessed Nilus: "Blessed is he whose life is lofty, his spirit lowly." Hear, too, the words of Cæsarius (*Hom.* 30): "As from an earthly fountain, or a terrestrial river, no one can drink unless he be willing to stoop; so also no one can draw living water from Christ, the Fountain of Life, and from the river of the Holy Ghost, unless he shall humble himself, according to that which is written—'God resisteth the proud.'" Lastly, S. Jerome gives a mirror of humility in S. Paula, of whom he writes thus in her epitaph: "She shines, amongst a multitude of gems, as the most precious of all, and, as a ray of the sun, obscures the little sparkles of the stars. Thus she surpassed the virtues of all by the power of her humility. She was the least of all, that she might become greater than all; and the more she cast herself down, the more she was lifted up by Christ. She was obscure, and yet she could not lie hid. By flying from glory, she merited renown, which follows virtue like its shadow, and —deserting those who hunger after it—seeks those who despise it."

*Whoso receiveth*, &c. That is in hospitality, to his table, by favour, or by assisting in any other way. By *receive* is here meant any kind of benefit, or charity, or benevolence. Observe, Luke has *this little child.* From this it appears that Christ speaks: 1. Of a child who is truly a little one: 2. Of a mystical child, viz., of a person who is lowly and humble. He rises from one to the other, playing upon the expression *little one* (parvulus). It is as though Christ said, "So pleasing is humility to Me, that I delight in children, because they bear humility about with them, in appearance, in their stature, their age, their innocence: and I would have all My disciples become little children, and imitate little children, and so deserve to be received by all men. For men will think that in them they receive Me, because they receive them for My sake. For of Me Isaiah prophesied "Unto us a child (*parvulus*) is born, to us a son is given." Like unto this is the voice of Christ in the following chapter, verse 14. S. Jerome observes that a little one is here spoken of, "because he who is offended is a little one; for those who are older do not take offence." Mark and Luke add, *He that receiveth Me, receiveth Him*

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*that sent Me.* Luke gives the reason, *He that is least among you all*, i.e., *who is the most humble of you all, he is the greatest*, that is to say, with Me and My Father which is in Heaven. "He is lowly," says S. Augustine, "who chooses rather to be an abject in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners." (*Vulg.*) This saying of Christ, S. Elizabeth, the daughter of the King of Hungary, stamped upon her very inmost heart. She fed and served daily nine hundred poor people, sick, full of scabs and ulcers. The lepers she washed with her own hands, wiped and kissed their ulcers. In such offices she delighted, and was wont to say, "How good and kind the Lord is to me, in that He suffers me to wash and wipe these people."

*Whoso shall offend*, &c. Syriac, *shall be for a stumbling block to.* That means, as Theophylact says, *shall injure*, as S. Chrysostom says, *shall despise.* It is opposed to the word, *shall receive*, in verse 5. So Maldonatus. But it is better to take, as Jansen does, the word *offence* in its proper meaning. For this is plain from what follows. So there is an antithesis between it and *receive.* As thus, he who shall receive a little child in My name, *i.e.*, shall cherish and advance him in My faith and love and worship, receives Me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, that is, shall by wicked word or example turn him from My love and worship, it would be better for him that he were drowned in the sea.

*It were better for him, i.e.*, as Luke has it (xvii. 2), "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. It were better to be sunk in the sea than to scandalize little ones upon earth, because drowning is the death of the body, but causing a scandal is the death of the soul, both your own and the the souls of those whom you cause to stumble, and lead into sin. S. Matthew leaves out the second part of the antithesis, which Luke expresses in the words, *than that he should offend one of these little ones.* S. Jerome gives a different turn. "It is better for him," he says, "to receive a short punishment for a fault, than to be reserved for eternal torments: for the Lord will not punish twice for the same offence."

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You will ask how this verse is connected with what precedes, and how this offence applies to the Apostles? S. Jerome replies, "Although this sentence may be taken as generally applicable against all who cause any one to stumble, nevertheless according to the sequence of the words, it can even be understood as spoken against the Apostles, who by asking which was the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven, seemed to contend among themselves about pre-eminence. And if they remained in this fault, they might destroy those whom they were inviting to the faith, by giving them cause of offence, when they saw the Apostles fighting among themselves about dignity. And when He says, it were better for him that a very heavy millstone were hung about his neck, He is speaking according to the custom of the country: for this was a method of punishing very great criminals amongst the ancient Jews, that a heavy stone should be tied to them, and that they should be sunk in a deep place."

*Millstone* (Vulg. *mola asinaria;* Gr. μύλος ὀνικὸς.) This is a millstone which in Palestine, say SS. Hilary and Ambrose, is turned by asses. Whence the Syriac translates, *the millstone of an ass.* It means a large and heavy millstone, which could not be turned by a man, but which would require a horse or an ass to turn it. Or it may mean the nether millstone upon which the upper millstone revolves. This nether millstone is called in Greek ὄνος, *an ass,* because it sustains the weight and burden of the upper millstone. Thus, too, the Hebrews call the upper stone רכב *recheb, a horseman,* because it rides, as it were, upon the nether stone.

Let the clergy and religious, who contend for pre-eminence among themselves, take note of this passage. For such contention causes seculars to stumble, and is a great disgrace and cause of reproach to religion. And it were better for them that they should be sunk with a millstone in the depths of the sea than that they should give cause of scandal to Christian people.

*Woe to the world,* &c.; that is, great and dreadful evils, both present and future, impend over men of the world, on account of God's wrath because of scandals, active as well as passive. For they who

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cause others to stumble by their ambition, or by the example of their evil life, are guilty of the punishment of hell. And they who are scandalized, and follow the evil examples of others, are condemned as their followers and associates, and both alike perish. The world is full of scandals, because it is full of wicked men, libertines, spendthrifts, and avaricious people. In order that they may satisfy their lusts, they cause all to stumble. Wherefore the larger part of mankind is damned because of scandals. Wherefore it follows, *it must needs be*, &c. Moreover, scandals, or offences—of which Christ is here speaking—are persecutions, derision, injuries of the righteous; also evil examples, false doctrines, things done or said unseasonably; for there are many things which are good and lawful in themselves, but by reason of inopportuneness of time, or place, when they are done before the uninstructed, become an occasion of scandal.

*It must needs be*, &c. Not absolutely, nor *per se*, but by supposition. For the various dispositions and corruptions of so many men being foreseen and presupposed; together with their levity, ambition, cupidity, forasmuch as they are free to be wicked, it is not possible but that sometimes by some, yea frequently by many, there should be (at least indeterminately, and in the gross) *scandals, i.e.*, crimes, and other things which cause the little ones to stumble. So S. Paul says (1 Cor. xi. 38): *There must be heresies.* Thus it is necessary *in genere*, and in the gross, that a just man should commit venial sin sometimes; although the particular acts of each individual are free, not absolutely determined. Therefore, any individual may avoid venial sins, considered one by one, but not all venial sins altogether. For let us grant that in individual cases a man may give such care and attention as not to sin, yet it is impossible that—taking all contingent events in the lump—a man should not sometimes be remiss, and fail, or slip. For this is the infirmity of the mind of man since the Fall. In the same way it is necessary that the most skilful archer, who to a certainty hits the mark as often as he chooses to do so, should sometimes miss it, if he is perpetually shooting at it. For this is a condition and result of human weakness—that mind, hand, or eye cannot long keep up the strain of their attention,

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that a man should hit the mark a hundred times running. He must miss sometimes.

*But woe to that man*, &c. Because he determinately, and of free will, in this or that wicked or indiscreet action gives an offence to the little ones, and so sins mortally. SS. Jerome and Bede apply these words to Judas, who gave the greatest scandal to the whole world, when he betrayed Christ. But the words are of general application, and threaten the woe of eternal damnation to all who are a cause of offence. Christ here teaches three things concerning scandals: 1. How grave they are in themselves and in their consequences. 2. How numerous they are, and that they must needs come; speaking generally. 3. How carefully they are to be avoided. Wherefore He subjoins,

*But if thy hand*, &c. (verses 8 and 9), as I have expounded on chapter v. 30.

*Take heed*, &c., viz., those who are lowly, whom the world despises as poor and miserable. For although they may be weak, yet have they guardian angels who are strong, who may accuse you to God the Father, whom they always behold, and by His command may severely avenge and punish all offences and wrongs done to those who have been committed to their charge.

*For I say unto you*, &c. From this passage, and from Gen. xlviii., 16, and Acts xii., 15, and from the general tradition of the Fathers, doctors teach that all Christians, yea indeed all men, have an angel who is appointed by God to be their guardian from birth unto death. Hear S. Jerome "Great is the dignity of souls, that each has from his birth an angel appointed to watch over him." And again, "The angels offer daily, through Christ, the prayers of those who are to be saved. It is therefore a perilous thing to despise one whose desires are carried to the eternal and invisible God by the ministry of angels." All the rest of the Ancients, and even the Protestant doctors, teach the same thing. Suarez cites them (*lib.* 6 *de Angelis*, *c.* 17, *n.* 8). He shews in opposition to Calvin and the Centuriators that it is an error to deny that a guardian angel is given by God to all men, not only to believers and the righteous, as Origen seems to have supposed,



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but even to unbelievers and the reprobate. Wherefore Antichrist will have his guardian angel, as S. Thomas teaches (1 *part. quæst.* 113, *art.* 4, *ad.* 3). Suarez teaches the same, and that guardian angels are ordinarily of the ninth, or lowest order of the angelic hierarchy, who are designated by the common appellation of angels. But to some special individuals of surpassing excellence or dignity, as Apostles, Prophets, Patriarchs, Bishops, Kings, guardians have been assigned of the eighth order, who are called archangels. Hence Gabriel was the guardian of the Blessed Virgin, and he is thought by many to belong to the order of the Seraphim. In saying that all men have a guardian angel, I except Christ, for He needed not an angel, whose Divinity was a sufficient guardian of His humanity. Nevertheless Christ had many angels always at hand to minister to His wants. On this subject we must read Origen with caution, who pretends that guardian angels sometimes sin through negligence in their guardianship, and therefore are deprived for a time of the vision of God. But this is an error, for all the angels are blessed, and therefore immutable and impeccable.

The offices of the guardian angels are as follows:—1. To avert dangers both of the body and the soul. 2. To illuminate and instruct those committed to their charge, and to urge them to good works. 3. To restrain the demon, that he may not suggest wicked thoughts, or furnish occasions of sin. 4. To offer to God the prayers of him whom he guards. 5. To pray for him. 6. To correct him if he sin. 7. To stand by him at the hour of death, to comfort and assist him in his last struggle. 8. After death to convey the soul to Heaven, or if it need purgatory, to accompany it thither, and when there to console it from time to time, until purgatory being over, he carries it to Heaven.

You will ask why the expression *their angels* connotes not only the *little ones* who believe in Christ, which is the direct antecedent, but all other men? S. Chrysostom replies that *angels* denote not any angels, but those of surpassing dignity, as though the care of the little ones were committed to the highest angels. S. Thomas interprets the highest angels to mean not the chief of the highest order,

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the Seraphim, but the chief of the ninth order of angels, so that the highest angels in that order are the guardians of men; those in the middle ranks, of animals; and the lowest, the guardians of trees and plants. To this we may add the opinion of Maldonatus, who thinks that the guardians of little ones are higher in rank than those of other men. And by *little ones* he understands not children, but the humble and the righteous, for whom God has greater care than for other men, as the whole of Scripture testifies. He proves that the angels of the little ones are greater and more honourable for this reason, that they always behold the face of God. Not that the other angels do not see It, but because by this expression the Hebrews signify one who is near to God, and His friend. It is a metaphor taken from courts, where the most honourable are those who are nearest to the king, and therefore most frequently see His face. Thus the Queen of Sheba says of the servants of Solomon, "Blessed are these thy servants, who stand before thee, and hear thy wisdom."

2. *Their angels*, denotes that the angels of little ones have special care of them, more than the angels of those who are grown up. Of *little ones*, I say, both those who are so in age and faith, as well as in their lot and condition. For these, since they are weak in judgment and prudence, have the greater need of the care and guardianship of angels. It is a saying of the common people, that infants and idiots are the chief objects of angels' care, for truly, unless angels had special care of infants, they would continually fall into the fire or water, and would be injured by pigs and beasts, and run over by horses and carriages.

3. *Their angels*, means that they are the peculiar friends of the little ones. For the angels marvellously love little children and the humble, because they, as it were, belong to them, and are most like them. For the angels are very humble, and by their humility they overcame Lucifer, saying, with S. Michael, their captain, *mi ca el*, i.e., who is as God? (*See Philip Berlemont, in the Paradise for Children*).

*Moraliter*: Learn from hence, first, how great is the dignity of souls, that they have angels for their guardians. In the next place,



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how great is the condescension of God, that he assigns to us such guides. For these are they of whom it is said in Psalm civ., "Who maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flaming fire." In the last place, how great is the humility and love of the angels, who do not disdain these offices, but delight in them, because they see their Lord and God made man, as S. Bernard says. Wherefore the same S. Bernard says, on the words of the Psalm, *He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways*, "What reverence ought these words to instil into thee, what devotion, what confidence. Reverence for the angel's presence, devotion for his kindness, confidence for his guardianship. Walk warily, even as one to whom angels are present, in all thy ways. Whithersoever thou turnest aside, in whatever corner thou art, reverence thy angel. Do not dare to do in his presence what thou wouldst not dare to do if I saw thee."

Again, since the angels make it their business to purify, illuminate and perfect us, it is right that we should obey them by striving with all our might to attain to great sanctity and perfection, that we should emulate the life and habits of the angels, as those who are to be by and bye their companions in Heaven, for as the Apostle says, "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." And, "Ye are come unto the city of the living God, to an innumerable company of angels." Wherefore let us put away far from us all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and especially all pride and contention. Nothing so provokes the angels to indignation as quarrels and scandals, as Christ here teaches, for they are the very angels of peace and edification.

In fine, let us often converse with our angels in spirit, as St. Bernard says, "Have the angels, my brethren, for your friends, and often go to them in earnest thought and devout adoration, for they are always present to guard and comfort you."

*Always behold*, &c., that is, the shining essence of God. The angels always see clearly without a veil, as it were face to face. The angels, says S. Augustine (*lib.* 9. *de Civit. c.* 22.), enjoy the immutable and ineffable beauty of God, with the holy love of Whom they burn:

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they despise all lower things, and themselves among them, that they may enjoy wholly, because they are good, that Good, by which they are good. The face of God then is the beauty and the brightness of the Divinity, clearly manifesting Itself to the angels, and making them blessed; for otherwise, strictly speaking, God has not a face, even as he has not a body.

*Which is in Heaven:* S. Gregory (2 *Moral. c.* 2.), and S. Bernard (*Serm.* 5, *de dedicat. Eccles.*) observe that the angels, even when they go forth from Heaven, always behold the face of God. For they are blessed wheresoever they are; therefore, wheresoever they are, they are said to be in Heaven. For where there is the vision and glory of God, there is Paradise and Heaven. Hence S. Gregory says, "They both stand before God, and are sent; because through this, that they have been circumscribed, they go forth; and through this, that they are also present within, they never go away. And therefore they always see the face of the Father, and yet come to us, because they go forth abroad to us in spiritual presence, and yet they keep themselves *there* by interior contemplation." And a little before, "What can they be ignorant of in things that can be known, who know Him who knoweth all things?" They are not therefore called away from the guardianship of the humble through desire of returning to God, because they never depart from God, but wheresoever they are, they have Him present. They do all things, and guard the little ones in God, and for the sake of God.

*The Son . . . that which was lost.* Gr. τὸ ἀπολωλός, even the whole human race, which was lost through Adam's sin. This is Christ's second reason why *the little ones* and the lowly must not be despised nor offended. As though Christ said—I, Who am the Son of God, make so great account of the little ones that for their sake I have stooped to the lowest depths of humility, and have come down from Heaven that I might assume their flesh. Wherefore their salvation has brought singular joy both to Me and to My Father, as will appear from the parable of the sheep, which I am about to subjoin. Take good heed therefore lest by your offences ye destroy those little ones whom I have redeemed at the expense of so much

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toil and blood. For if ye do, ye will make not only the angels, but My Father and Myself your enemies. For I love the little ones even as My own children and My most intimate friends. They are My especial property, and if ye take them away from Me by causing them to offend, I will require it at your hand.

*How think ye*, &c. . . . *doth He not leave the ninety-nine upon the mountains?* (Vulg.): Where they feed after their manner.

This parable may be expounded and applied in these ways:—1. Generally, of angels and men. 2. Particularly, of men only. 3. Specially, of the little ones alone. Many generally, by the ninety-nine sheep feeding upon the mountains understand the holy angels, who have the fruition of God in Heaven, who have never sinned. By the hundredth sheep which went astray, they understand the whole human race which sinned in Adam, and which, that He might redeem, and bring it back into the way of salvation, Christ as it were left the angels, and came down from Heaven, and was made man. So S. Hilary, Theophylact, Anselm, in this passage; S. Gregory (*Hom. 34 in Evang.*); Cyril (*Catech.* 15); S. Ambrose (*in Apolog. David, c.* 5); Irenæus (*l.* 3, *c.* 21); Origen (*Hom. 2 in Genes.*); and many others. Gather from hence how vast is the multitude of the angels, which as greatly exceeds the number of all the men who have been, or are, or ever will be, as ninety-nine exceeds one.

You may say, These sheep are the sheep of the Son of man. But Christ, as man, fed not the angels, but men only. Yet Christ was not as yet man, when he came down to this world to seek the hundredth sheep, *i.e.*, man. It is replied, The angels are the sheep of the Son of Man: 1, *materially*, because they are the sheep of the Son of God, who is also Son of Man. Whilst in the post-parable, not the Son of Man is spoken of, but God the Father, when it is said, *It is not the will of your Father . . that one of these little ones should perish.*

1. *Formaliter*, also: For Christ *quâ* man, is also the Saviour of the angels, though not their Redeemer, as He is of men. For, for the angels He merited all grace and glory, *i.e.*, election, predestination, vocation, all helps, stirring up, assisting, sufficing and efficacious: and lastly all merit and increase of grace and glory. Wherefore

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Christ is the meritorious cause of the grace and glory of the angels. And the angels, on their part had a lively faith in Christ Incarnate, and by that were justified. So Richardus, Albertus, Catherinus, Galatinus, and others, whom Suarez cites (3. *p. q.* 19. *disp.* 42. *sect.* 1.), although Paludanus, Durandus, Bonaventura, and Alensis think the contrary, that Christ merited grace and glory for men alone, not for the angels.

2. *Particularly:* By *sheep*, men only may be understood. For as a shepherd searches after a single stray sheep, and is glad when he finds it, so Christ sought the whole human race, and rejoiced when He brought it back.

3. This parable is of special application to the little ones, *i.e.*, the poor, the despised, the ignorant, the simple, and the humble, who are small in wisdom, or wealth, or honour, or prudence. To them Christ applies the 14th verse; and all that preceded had reference to the little ones. Wherefore He contrasts the one little sheep which went astray with the ninety-nine who went not astray, *i.e.*, with those who are great in wisdom, riches, or authority, or who esteem themselves great. For these are supposed to go astray and sin less. For little sheep, as lambs, forasmuch as they are simple and inexperienced are more ready to go astray than older sheep, who are accustomed to look to and follow their companions and their shepherd. The meaning is as follows: As a shepherd who has ninety-nine sheep, if the hundredth little one, being, say a lamb, wanders from the flock, the shepherd leaves the ninety-nine, and seeks the missing lamb. Thus Christ leaves those who through His grace are already great in faith and virtue, or who esteem themselves so, the number of whom is very great, to take care of themselves and each other. But if any one who is little in faith and prudence wander from the way of salvation, He seeks for him by Himself, by His angels, by His doctors and preachers, that He may bring him back into the way. For He has a singular and peculiar love and care for these little ones, forasmuch as they are forsaken by others, and left to themselves. This it is plain is the true sense of the parable from what has been now said, and because Christ, in repeating it in Luke

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xv. 4, so explains it; except that by the ninety-nine sheep He understands the just, and by the one hundredth erring one he means the sinner. But here by the ninety-nine He means the great, and by the hundredth, the little ones.

*He rejoiceth more*, &c. Habitually, the shepherd rejoices more over ninety-nine sheep (because of their number) than he does over one. Whence, if he were asked whether he would rather lose ninety-nine than the one which had gone astray, he would answer, By no means. I would rather lose one than ninety-nine. Nevertheless, actually—and in this particular instance—he does rejoice more over the one which had gone astray, and is brought back into the way of salvation. This is so, because this return raises a new and immense gladness, and because it drives away the sorrow which had arisen at the loss. For the joy which suddenly succeeds to sorrow is the greatest of all. Roman history relates how a mother, who was grieving for the loss of her son, who was said to be slain at Cannæ, when she unexpectedly beheld him alive, expired for joy. Thus if any city or province be converted from heresy or idolatry, we rejoice more on account of it, than over all other cities or provinces that are already converted. This is, as it were, a third reason, whereby Christ by a parable shews that the little ones must not be despised.

*Even so it is not the will*, &c., that is, God does not wish, nor is it pleasing to Him that one of the little ones should perish.

*But if thy brother sin*, Syriac, *shall err*, in allusion to the wandering sheep, of which He had been speaking. Christ passes appropriately from little ones to sinners, because they are little, that is despised and abject. For what is more worthless than sin and sinners? As therefore He taught that the little ones who are offended must not be despised, so now He likewise teaches that sinners who offend and injure others must not be despised, nor must vengeance be inflicted upon them for the injuries they have done, but that they must be corrected in love, that they may be restored to God's grace, and to salvation. Christ therefore gives this as the remedy by which *scandals* may be taken away, even by the correction of him who caused the scandal.

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*Sin against thee.* Certain Protestants expound the words *against thee*, to mean, thou alone knowing; if any one sin secretly and privately, secretly correct him; for the public sinner must be publicly corrected, as an example to others. But the words *against thee*, are no where taken as meaning, thou alone being conscious. And Luke explains it as *against thee.* For he says, (xvii. 3), If thy brother sin against thee, rebuke him, but if he repent, forgive him; that, namely in which he has sinned against thee. This is the way in which S. Peter understood the expression, for he, having reference to these words of Christ, asks the question, *how oft shall my brother sin against me?* Christ alludes to Leviticus xix. 17. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, but openly rebuke him." Meaning do not cherish secret hatred against thy neighbour who has injured thee, but tell him plainly and openly that thou hast been wronged by him, that he may amend and make satisfaction to thyself and God by repentance. Whence Tertullian (*l.* 4, *contra Marc. c.* 35), understands this passage of Leviticus concerning brotherly correction, as if it had been commanded to the Jews.

You may say, then our neighbour is to be corrected only for sins against ourselves, not for those against God. I answer by denying the consequence, because Christ by synecdoche, speaking of injuries done to us, means to include all other sins. For there is the same, yea, a greater application to other sins. For if our neighbour is to be corrected for injuries done to us, much more for the offences by which he had offended God. We ought to love God better than ourselves: therefore we ought to ward off from Him their injuries, more than from ourselves. Christ however makes mention only of sin against ourselves, that He may put a bridle upon revenge, and substitute charity instead of it, and from charity brotherly correction. It is as though He said, if thy neighbour have offended or injured thee, do not make it publicly known or avenge it, but first reprove him lovingly and secretly. We must understand, if there be hope of amendment by such means, otherwise, omitting the private correction, we must proceed to correction in the presence of witnesses. But if there be no hope from this, we must tell it to the Church, *i.e.*, to the

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pastor or the prelate. But if not even from this there be hope of amendment, this correction must be altogether omitted, and left to God. The reason is an *à priori* one. As charity obliges me to succour my neighbour when he is in any grave corporal necessity, so much more does it oblige me to succour him in any spiritual necessity, such as a state of sin and condemnation. Rightly argues Suarez, (2. 2. *q.* 33.) In addition to the hope of profit, in order that this precept may bind, it is necessary that my neighbour should stand in need of my correction. If for instance I am reasonably afraid that unless I correct him he will fall in the like sins. This is proved, because this is an affirmative precept of mercy. It is therefore only binding according to the rules of similar precepts; therefore, only in a case of necessity.

It may be asked whether this correction be a matter of precept, or of counsel only? Again, whether it binds all the faithful, or priests and superiors only? 1. SS. Augustine, Chrysostom, Hilary, Basil, Theophylact, Bonaventura, and others, think that the correction of which Christ here speaks, has regard only to such as sin against us. As much as to say, Do not inflict vengeance upon him who has injured thee, but lovingly correct him; and so this correction would be of precept rather than of counsel. Salmeron attempts to prove this view by many reasons, but what he says must be read with the greatest caution. For he might seem in his eleventh tractate to do away with this correction sanctioned by Christ altogether, and to find fault with it as useless, and often pernicious. But he does not express his own opinion, but that of others whom he cites, as he says expressly in the beginning of his eleventh chapter. Again he does not set aside the declaration of Christ, but the opinion of those scholastics and interpreters, who extend Christ's declaration to every kind of case whatsoever, who maintain that this mode of correction should be observed with respect to all sins, though Christ only enjoins it expressly with reference to the correction of those who sin against us. And Suarez himself shews that frequently this method cannot be observed, except to the detriment of the commonwealth, as clearly appears in a case of heresy, which creeps secretly like a cancer.

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2. Johannes Archias (*in cap. Novit. de Judiciis*), think that this correction is of precept to priests and prelates only; and of counsel to the laity. But this is too lax.

3. Others think that this correction is of precept to the neighbours only, since it would be incongruous that a man who is guilty of the same, or a similar fault, should reprove another for that fault. Abulensis seems to favour this opinion. But I say that the correction which is here enjoined by Christ is not merely of counsel, but of precept, and is binding upon all the faithful. For although Christ says in express words only that those who have sinned against us are to be corrected, yet by parity of reasoning He intended it to be extended to all sinners. So the interpreters and scholastics, with S. Thomas, *passim* (*2. 2. quæst.* 33). This is plain from the expression, *thy brother*. For brother denotes any Christian believer, and an equal rather than a superior. For although unbelievers are at times to be corrected, yet Christ is here speaking only of the faithful as belonging to Himself and subject to His Church. For infidels cannot be punished and excommunicated by the Chnrch, inasmuch as they do not belong to it.

The reason is *à priori*, because this precept of correction is, both as regards its substance, as well as its method and order, not so much a positive command; and, according to the *jus divinum*, as of the *jus naturæ*, belonging naturally to charity and grace. For charity requires that we should bring back our neighbour when he sins into the way of salvation by correcting him; and that we should have regard to his shame as well as his good name. For as S. Jerome says, "If he lose shame and modesty, he will remain in sin." For it is not public and judicial correction which is here treated of, which deals with the just punishment of offences committed against the commonwealth, but that private correction which tends to the salvation of our neighbour when he sins. This reason is urged by S. Augustine (*Serm.* 16, *de Verb. Apost.*) "Rebuke thy neighbour," he says, "between thee and him alone, for the sake of the correction, and sparing his shame. For perchance he may, through shame, begin to defend his sin; and thus him, whom thou wishest to become

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better, thou makest worse." And again, "Forget thine own injury, not thy brother's fall, nor suffer him to perish through thy silence. If thou alone knowest his fault, and reprovest it before others, thou art not a corrector, but a betrayer."

Wherefore, in order that this correction, which of itself is an odious thing, may be fruitful and efficacious, two principal things are needed; namely, charity and prudence, or discretion. Charity; that he who sins may feel that the correction proceeds not from hatred, or pride, but from love and compassion. Prudence, that it may be done modestly and gently, and with such circumstances of time and place and manner, as that he who has sinned may receive it gratefully, and may amend, according to the Apostle's words, "Instruct in the spirit of meekness, &c." (*Gal.* vi. 1.) As S. Leo says (*Epist.* 84.), "Let there be benevolence rather than severity uppermost in the corrector; let there be more of exhortation than of fussiness; more of love than of power."

Moreover so great is the need of mutual correction of faults that a certain holy father was wont to say that there was nothing so great a cause of ruin as the lack of brotherly correction, and the violation of the precept to avoid impurity. S. Augustine (*l.* 1. *de Civit. Dei. c.* 9.) testifies that because of the omission of this brotherly correction, the good as well as the bad in this world are afflicted with very grievous calamities. The *Gloss* says, he who sees his brother commit a sin, and keep silence, is equally in fault with him who does not forgive him who repents. The very elements teach us the benefit of this correction. For so fire chastises, and by burning purifies the air. The air by the blasts of winds chastises and purifies the water. In like manner so does the water the earth. There can be no Christian charity in any one unless he afford the medicine of correction to an erring brother.

In the last place, ordinarily, brotherly correction is only of obligation when the sin is mortal. Although indeed Cajetan, Valentia and D. Soto, think we are under an obligation to correct when the sin is venial. But this does not seem to be generally true, nor is it usual in practice, unless grave loss or scandal follow from the venial sin.

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For otherwise the burden of correcting every single trifling fault and, being corrected for them, would be equally intolerable both to the corrector and the corrected: Indeed it would be morally impossible. (*See Suarez 2. 2. tract. de charitate, disp.* 8. *sect.* 2).

*If he shall hear thee*, &c. Thou hast saved him who was ready to perish, and hast gained for God and heaven, him who was in danger of hell; yea thou hast gained him for thyself, because both thou and he had suffered loss from discord, as S. Chrysostom says. "By the salvation of another, salvation is gained for ourselves also," says S. Jerome.

*But if he will not hear thee* &c. Christ orders that if the person corrected reject a secret admonition, he must be corrected in the presence of one or two others, and this for two reasons. The first is that he who is not ashamed in the presence of one may be ashamed in the presence of a greater number, and that several witnesses may the more easily and effectually convince him of sin, and persuade him to amend.

*But if He will not hear them*, &c. This is the third stage to be observed in the order of correction, that those who are unwilling to listen to him who admonishes them, nor yet to the witnesses, may be brought before the Church, that is to a pastor and superior, or a prelate, as to a spiritual father and a judge, that he may paternally, but with greater authority, correct the sin, and so bring about amendment. But that if the sinner will not be reformed, he may as a judge cut him off from the company of the faithful. Five acts, says Suarez, are to be noted in this order of correction, as given by S. Matthew. The 1st is private admonition: *Tell him his fault between thee and him alone.* 2. Correction, *before one or two witnesses.* 3. Denunciation: *Tell it to the Church.* 4. The rebuke of the prelate, *if he will not hear the Church.* 5. Coercion by means of excommunication: *let him be to thee as a heathen.*

For various reasons this order may be omitted, or inverted. And there are times when it is right that he who has sinned should be immediately brought to a superior, as Salmeron shews upon this passage. The first of such cases is when the sin is public, so that it is impossible by means of secret admonition to preserve the good

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name of the offender. 2. When the sin is against a third person, or the commonwealth, such as heresy, which eats like a cancer, and which ought therefore to be at once repressed with the utmost rigour by the pastor and bishop. 3. If it be evident that private monition, or before witnesses will be of no avail. For as Adrian says, "To strive in vain, and to labour for no other end than to gain hatred, is a mark of the utmost folly." 4. If he who is corrected waives his right, and is content that his transgression be straightway laid before the superior. As it is in the Society of Jesus, those who enter it are expressly asked about this matter, whether they be willing that it shall be so. Among the Jesuits therefore, and other similar religious orders, a different method of correction is prescribed, namely that the case shall be immediately taken before the Superior, for this rule is set before the religious at their entrance. They waive this particular right of caring for their reputation. No wrong therefore is done them.

The first reason is because it is expedient for the general good, lest the sin should infect others, and that the superior should take immediate steps to guard against it. 2. Because Religion is the school of humility and mortification, and of contempt of honour and reputation. 3. Because Religious are brethren. And he who corrects seems to set himself up as the superior of him who is corrected. Hence, our rule commands that no one shall reprove another. S. Augustine (*Epist.* 109), in his rules for monks, ordains that if a monk shall see another casting a wanton glance, he shall admonish him privately—if he repeat the glance, he shall tell it to the superior. S. Basil has a similar rule (*Reg.* 46). Rashly, therefore, have some persons carped at this rule of religious orders. For these statutes have been approved by the Apostolic See. The statutes of the Dominicans have a similar provision. So S. Thomas, Richard, Angelus, Salmeron, Suarez, and others. Vide Suarez (*tom.* 4, *de relig. cap.* 7), where he adds that in the Society of Jesus and other religious orders, this rule of Christ is observed wherever there is any certain hope that secret correction will produce amendment. Moreover, in episcopal and abbatial visitations a different order is observed. For then it is ordered, on pain of censure, that sins

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shall be denounced. But bishops and abbots proceed not according to the method of fraternal correction, but of judicial enquiry. And of this Christ says nothing in this place.

Lastly, let the three following canons be noted, for if they be observed, nothing will be done amiss as regards brotherly correction. 1. Let the general good—that is, of the state, or the community—overweigh everything else; and, therefore, individual advantage. 2. Let the good of the soul, and the salvation of our neighbour, take precedence of the care of his reputation. 3. Always consider your neighbour's reputation, as far as is consistent with the general good, and the salvation of his soul.

*Tell it to the Church:* that is, to the pastor who presides over your own Church. You ask, What is here meant by *the Church?* SS. Jerome and Anselm in this passage, and S. Gregory (*lib.* 4, *Epist.* 38) understand the company of the faithful; as if Christ here intended that an offender should be reproved before them, and put to shame, and so corrected. Zwinglius and the Protestants follow this with avidity, that they may find a sanction for their democratic and popular form of Church government. Whence Castalini profanely translates *tell the Church, tell the republic.* Others render, *tell the community.* But S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, and others (*passim*) understand by *Church* the pastors and prelates of the Church, who represent the Church (either individually or in Synod) as magistrates represent a republic, and a king a kingdom. This is proved—1. Because Christ here orders the Church to be heard, *i.e.*, obeyed by him who is accused; otherwise he is to be accounted as a heathen. But this obedience is only rendered to the prelates of the Church, as is plain; yea, this reason persuaded Calvin to agree with our opinion. 2. Because Christ—explaining what is meant by *the Church*—subjoins, *whatsoever ye shall bind;* as if to say, Ye, O ye Apostles, as princes of the Church, and those who shall succeed you as bishops and pastors. 3. Because the universal custom of the Church has been that such a one should be brought to Pastors, Bishops, the Pope, or a General Council; not before the people. 4. Because to do otherwise would be contrary to the law of

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nature and a grievous wrong to our neighbour. It would be to defame him, if his crime were a secret one. Those Calvinists therefore who denounce the crimes of their adulterous members and other sinners publicly in the Church, as though Christ here commanded it, offend grievously, and sin against charity. The true meaning is, if a brother, when reproved, will not hearken to him who corrects him in private, or even before two or three witnesses, let him be brought to the Prelate, who as Rector represents the Church, that he who despises private persons, may at least reverence the Prelate, and give heed to his correction. But if he will not, that then the Prelate, who not only has the office of private correction, but has the care of the whole Church, may provide that the wickedness of him who is reproved may not affect the whole body; but that he may separate him as a diseased sheep from the rest of the flock, and may excommunicate and expel him. Hence it is plain against the same Protestants that the Church is visible, forasmuch as it ought to be approached by him who corrects, and seen and obeyed by him who is corrected.

You may say, If, then, the prelates themselves, and especially if the Pope sin, he ought in like manner to be brought before a general council, and therefore the Pope is subject to it, and consequently the government of the church is aristocratic—not monarchical. So Abulensis (*quæst.* 108), Panormitanus, Gerson, Almain, and others, who, in accordance with this opinion, deposed Pope Eugenius IV., in the Council of Basle. But this rash act of theirs was shortly afterwards annulled and repudiated by the Council of Florence. I reply, therefore, by denying the consequence, as far as the Pope is concerned. For if Bishops sin they must be brought before the Pope, that they may be corrected by him. For the rule of which we have been speaking does not apply to the Pope, but to all others who have superiors. But the Pope has no superior upon earth—not even the Church, or a general council. For he is the head of the whole Church, as the perpetual usage and consent of the Church holds with the Lateran Council under Leo X. (*Sess.* 11). This is why it was once declared by acclamation in a

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council of one hundred and eighty Bishops at Sinuessa to Pope S. Marcellinus, when he repented after a fall. "Thou judgest thyself by thine own mouth: it is not our judgment, for the chief See is judged by none." S. Damasus is the authority for this, and Platina in his *Life*. The Pope is greater in the Church than a king in his kingdom. For a king receives his power from the state, but the Pope receives his power not from the Church, but directly from Christ. Wherefore, under no circumstances can he be deposed by the Church, but can only be declared to have fallen from his Pontificate, if, for the sake of example, he should chance (which God forbid) to fall into public heresy, and should therefore, *ipso facto*, cease to be Pope, yea, to be a Christian believer.

*But if he will not hear*, &c. For he who despises the Prelate of the Church giving him admonition, despises the Church of which he is a ruler, and shows thereby that he will not be a son and citizen of the Church. Wherefore he must be accounted not a faithful Christian, but a heathen and a publican, that is to say, a public sinner.

Again, *let him be as a heathen*, implies that you must not eat with him, nor greet him (1 *Cor.* v. 11, *and* 2 *John, verse* 10), that he may be confounded by the disgrace, and acknowledge his fault, and return to the Church. For excommunication is pronounced against a sinner, not to cause him to perish, but in order that he may amend.

*Verily I say unto you*, &c. Christ here explains what His Church is, and its power and authority; viz., that by the Church, Apostles and Prelates are meant, to whom He has given the power of binding and loosing both from sins and from excommunication, so that whomsoever they shall absolve from their sins on earth, God will absolve in Heaven: and whomsoever they, by excommunication shall eject from the company of the faithful, God will blot out his name from the Book of Life, and from the number of the blessed.

*Whatsoever ye shall bind*: Origen, Theophylact, and Anastasius of Nice (*q.* 74) think that these words likewise pertain to the precept about correction, and therefore apply to all Christians. They explain as follows:—To whatsoever penitents you, O ye faithful, remit any



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offence which they have committed against you, God will remit it to them in heaven: but to those to whom ye do not remit, neither will God remit it to them. But this is an explanation which cannot be upheld. This is plain from the following consideration, that Christ speaks of the Church in opposition to private sinners, and those who correct them. Therefore by the Church He means her Prelates, and not the faithful generally. Again, because He assigns judgment and a tribunal to the Church, (and this belongs only to Prelates) to which obedience ought to be rendered, on pain of being considered a heathen, and afterwards refers to that judgment of the Church this general power of binding and loosing, both internal, *in foro conscientiæ*, and external, *in foro externo*, by excommunication, the opinion of Origen cannot be correct. For the sinner is brought to the Pastor of the Church, that he may be moved to repentance and confession, and so be absolved from his sin, and be justified and reformed, but if not that he may be excommunicated. So SS. Chrysostom, Hilary, Augustine, and others, *passim*. Wherefore theologians rightly gather and prove from this passage, the power of excommunication, as well as the sacrament of penance after the method of judgment and absolution. The Emperor Theodosius understood this, when being expelled from the Church by S. Ambrose because of his slaughter of the Thessalonians, he made his moan, "Even to slaves and beggars there is access to the temple of God, but I am shut out. For I know the Lord hath said, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.'" Wherefore as a suppliant, he asked for absolution from S. Ambrose. This he obtained, and fulfilled the penance which he enjoined upon him. The Council of Basle take note from S. Thomas that there are three kinds of binding and loosing recognised by Catholics. The first is of authority, which belongs to God alone. The second of excellency, which is peculiar to Christ. The third, which has been granted by Christ to priests alone. Moreover this power of binding and loosing is a very ample one, and embraces various particulars, as I have shown in chapter xvi. 19.

Observe here the beautiful order of Christ's discourse. In the

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beginning of the chapter, when the Apostles were disputing about precedence, He puts the humility of the little ones, as it were a bridle upon them: and warns them lest by their ambition they offend the simple folk, and those who are as yet feeble in the faith of Christ. Then in verse 15, He gives a remedy against scandal, brotherly correction; and He says all these things to the Apostles, as representing all the faithful. Then because He gives as the final stage of correction, that the Church must be told, that is to say, the Prelate of the Church, He intimates what His authority is, by saying, *whatsoever ye shall bind on earth*, &c. For this power of binding and loosing appertains to Prelates, not to the rest of the faithful.

*Again I say unto you*, &c. The connection of these words with what precedes is difficult to be traced. Therefore it has been taken in various ways. 1. Some are of opinion that the words refer to *the two witnesses*, of whom Christ speaks in verse 16. Then the Gloss expounds, if two of you shall agree upon earth either in receiving one who is repentant, or in rejecting one who is proud, or about any other matter, about which they shall ask, it shall be done for them by My Father in Heaven.

2. Jansen draws out the connection thus—If two shall ask anything of God, He will grant it: how much more therefore will He ratify the judgment of the Church in binding and loosing? And Maldonatus thus—"In order that ye may not err in the judgment of binding and loosing, let prayer precede it. For if ye judge in My Name, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, ye shall obtain." 3. Francis Lucas thus—To you, O ye Apostles, not only do I give the power of binding and loosing, but another great gift as well. It is that if two of you agree to ask anything of God, ye shall obtain it. 4. Clearly and correctly, SS. Jerome, Hilary, Chrysostom, refer the words to the advantage of unity, of which He makes mention, verse 15: for the sake of which He instituted the precept of fraternal correction. It is as though Christ said, I have ordained that if any one sin against thee, thou shalt not pursue him with hatred, but shalt kindly correct him, with this end in view, that if two of you, especially if ye have been previously at enmity, or dis-



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agreement, should agree together, and unitedly ask anything of God, they may obtain it. Hear S. Jerome, "Christ's entire preceding discourse had invited to concord; and now He makes a promise of a reward, that we may with eagerness hasten unto peace. For He says that He will be in the midst of two, or three. Thus the Apostles persevering in prayer with one accord, obtained the Holy Ghost at Pentecost." (Acts i. 14.)

*If two:* S. Chrysostom and Euthymius restrict this promise to the Apostles. Anastasius to the corrector and the corrected. Origen, to a husband and wife, that if they agree to abstain from the use of matrimony, that they may give themselves to prayer, they shall obtain whatever they ask. But I say that the words refer to all faithful Christians, for to them Christ was speaking in the persons of the Apostles, who alone were present.

*Concerning anything*, any proper thing, whether it be small or great, whether easy or difficult. Only you will understand that they must ask faithfully, hopefully, humbly and perseveringly: also that the thing asked for is expedient for them. For if it be not expedient, God will not give them what they ask, but something else which is far better and more profitable for them.

*In My Name, i.e.*, for My sake; in respect of Me; for My sake and My love, seeking nothing but Me and My glory.

*There am I*, &c., *i.e.*, there I stand, and co-operate, and guide their desires and prayers, and fulfil them. I am in the midst of them, as the Holy Ghost is in the midst of the Father and the Son, as it were the love and bond of both. S. Hilary gives the reason, "Because He who is peace and love will make his dwelling-place with good and peaceful dispositions." And Origen says, we often fail to be heard of God, because we disagree among ourselves, and he gives the cause. "As in music, unless there be harmony and concord between the sounds, the hearer is not gratified. So is it with the Church; unless there be agreement, God does not delight in it, nor listen to its voice."

Some writers, arguing from the major to the minor, prove, not inaptly, the authority of Councils. For the declaration is a general one, and has proportionally greater force as respects Councils, than

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as regards other things. For if Christ be in the midst of two, much more must He be in the midst of the whole Church, gathered together in His Name, and represented by the Prelates and Bishops. For Councils are properly gathered together in the Name of Christ, *i.e.*, by His authority, that they may increase and propagate His faith and glory. Wherefore when they ask in the Name of Christ that they may not err in faith, that they may reform the manners of the faithful, that they may have the assistance of the Holy Spirit, they certainly obtain these things. This is especially true of Œcumenical Councils, but it is applicable to Provincial Councils also, when they are legitimately constituted, and approved by the Pope.

*In Heaven.* The *Gloss* says, By this He shows that God is above all things, and that He can fulfil what He is asked to do. Or, *in Heaven* may mean *in the Saints*, which is equivalent to saying, that whatever they ask shall be done for them, because they have Him with them, from Whom they ask.

*Then came Peter*, &c. Peter was led to ask this question in consequence of what Luke (xvii. 4) says Christ added upon this occasion. "And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." Where *seven times* means the same as often, or indeed always, when thy brother repents. But Peter did not clearly understand whether *seven times* were to be taken definitely for the precise number seven, or whether it were to be taken indefinitely for as often as might be needed. He asks therefore Christ to explain His meaning, and to tell him exactly how often he was to forgive his brother his trespasses. Peter's breast was narrow as yet, carnal, and bounded by the flesh. He could not understand the infinite abyss of mercy which there was in the Divine nature of Christ.

*Jesus said unto him*, &c. That is, times innumerable thou shalt forgive thy brother's trespasses, if he repent. This is what I meant when I said (as in Luke xvii. 4) *Thou shalt forgive him seven times.* By *seven times* I meant *seventy times seven*, that is always, times without number. So SS. Chrysostom and Augustine (*Serm.* 15 *de Verb. Dom.*). "I dare to say that if he shall sin against thee seventy times eight,

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thou shalt forgive him, or a hundred times eight. For if Christ found a thousand sins and forgave all, withdraw not thou thy mercy. For the Apostle says, "Forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."

*Symbolically*, S. Gregory (*lib.* 32, *Moral. cap.* 12) teaches that eleven is the symbol of sin, because this number transgresses the number of the Decalogue, ten. But seven is the symbol of totality, because in the seven first days of the world God created and set in order this whole universe. Again, in seven days, perpetually recurring, the whole of time is included. Seventy-seven is composed of eleven times seven. Therefore, seventy-seven signifies that all sins of every kind must be forgiven. This number, then, is the symbol of the plenary and perfect remission of all sins, whensoever a sinner repents. "Christ," says S. Hilary, "has an allusion to Lamech, who said, when confessing his homicide, 'Vengeance shall be taken of Cain sevenfold; but of Lamech, seventy times seven'" (Gen. iv. 24). See what I have there said. For as Lamech was punished, as it were, in seventy-seven generations, for as Josephus says, he had seventy-seven sons, who all perished in the deluge, so Christ our Saviour, by whom all sin is done away, was born from seventy-seven generations. For in the genealogy of Christ, as given by S. Luke, from God and Adam unto Christ there are numbered, inclusively, seventy-seven generations.

*Moraliter:* Learn from hence the breadth of the heart, and the abyss of the love of Christ, who wishes us to forgive our brother seventy times seven, that is, whenever he offends against us. For if he wills us weak men to have so great charity and liberality, what do we think must be the abyss of love which He hath in Himself? Appositely says S. Augustine, "He sins once, I forgive. He sins a second and a third time, I forgive. He sins a fourth time: he must be chastised. Let us correct by words, and if need be, by stripes. But let us forgive the offence, let us put away the fault from our memory, that even though some discipline be imposed for love's sake, gentleness may not depart out of our heart." This number will be far greater, if with Origen we take the words exactly. For Christ

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said not, seventy times and seven times, but seventy times seven, that is to say four hundred and ninety; as it is clearly in the Greek, ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτά. So many times does Christ wish us to forgive a penitent his offences. According to this meaning there will be an allusion to the seventy weeks of Daniel. For these make four hundred and ninety years which elapsed from the decree for rebuilding Jerusalem unto Christ, by whom there is full remission of all sins. See what I have said on Daniel ix. 24.

*Therefore the kingdom of Heaven is likened*, &c. The scope and signification of this parable will become apparent from the post-parable, ver. 35. *So likewise will your Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother.* This is the end in view of the parable, and the parts of it which pertain to this are to be referred to the thing signified. The other emblems are only for the adorning of the parable, having nothing to do with its signification, strictly speaking. Such mere emblems in this case are the command in ver. 25, for the sale of the wife and children; and the accusation of the cruel servant by his fellow-servants (ver. 31). Again the scope of the parable is intimated by the word *therefore*, which has reference to the preceding verse. The force of it is as follows: "That ye may know how pleasing it is to God, and how it has been enjoined by Him, that we shall forgive our brother who has trespassed against us just as often as he repents, I therefore subjoin a parable, in which I compare the kingdom of Heaven to a king taking account of his servants."

*And when he began*, &c. An Attic talent was equivalent to six hundred golden crowns. Ten thousand talents therefore would make a sum of six million golden crowns, a vast, an immense sum, altogether beyond the ability of a poor man to pay. And this sum would be twenty times as much, if we take the value of a Hebrew talent as our standard, for it was worth three thousand shekels, or twelve thousand French crowns. Thus ten thousand talents would be equivalent to a hundred and twenty million French crowns. And as Christ was speaking not to Greeks but to Jews, He would speak of the Hebrew talent. Consider then, that according to this parable, God requires of a sinner,

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who has committed but one mortal sin, more than if a master should require of a poor slave more than a hundred and twenty million crowns. For a single mortal sin, forasmuch as it is committed against God, and as far as in it lies, robs God of His Deity, is a far greater injury to God than all injuries done to all kings could be. It is a far greater debt than all the debts of all mankind, which are owed by them to all other men. For as God is far above all men, yea though they seem infinite in number, so does an injury against God surpass all the injuries done to men, and contract an infinite guilt and debt of punishment. Wherefore this vast amount of debt pertains rather to the thing signified, that is to say, mortal sin, than to the actual parable of the servant. For what servant could contract a debt of one hundred and twenty millions, unless he stole the king's treasury, or destroyed, or betrayed a whole realm? Moreover if one mortal sin be a debt of one hundred and twenty millions, of how many millions will his debt consist, who has committed a hundred, a thousand, yea many thousand mortal sins? Now this suits the words *seventy times seven.* As though it were said—if God forgives you so vast a multitude of sins, far more in comparison than ten thousand talents, much more ought we to forgive all the trespasses of our neighbours, which are of far less consequence against us. Especially since God forgives us, upon this condition, our great faults, that we should forgive our neighbours their few and small faults. See Matthew vi. 14. The reason is an *à priori* one. Because God is infinite goodness, so also is sin an immeasurable evil. From hence it follows that no mere creature can make any equivalent satisfaction for mortal sin. Yea not all the works of the saints can make compensation for even one sin. Therefore in order to make an equivalent satisfaction for sin it was necessary that the Son of God should become incarnate, and should suffer; as the Fathers teach. Lastly: sin is rightly compared to a talent, because like a talent and weight of lead it sinks a man down to hell.

Verse 25. *When he had not,* &c. It was the law amongst various nations that if a debtor could not pay, his creditor might sell him with his wife and children, and pay himself with the price for which

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they were sold. That this was the custom among the Jews is seen from 2 Kings iv. 1., where the wife of a prophet who had died, said to Elisha, "Behold the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen."

*Mystically*: S. Jerome, "As the wife of the just man is called wisdom, so also the wife of the unjust and the sinner is called folly, whose children are evil thoughts."

*Falling down*, upon his knees, or his face: *Besought him.* Many Greek MSS. read, παρεκάλει, but the greater number with the Syriac have προσεκύνει αὐτῷ, *worshipped him.* The Arabic has, *Be patient, and I will give thee what is thine.* This servant, that he may escape the sale of himself and his family into slavery promises mountains of gold. "O my master! I will pay thee all I owe." But this was impossible. But he would gain time, that through the delay he might employ the prayers of his friends to bend the mind of the king, whom he knew to be liberal and large-hearted, to forgive him the debt. And in this he was not mistaken. Hence it follows:

*The Lord had compassion*, &c. The things are spoken parabolically to show how pleasing to God are a humble confession of sin, and prayer for pardon. Again there is signified how infinite is God's mercy which immediately forgave this vast debt of sin to the servant who asked for it. Here is the scope of the parable. It is *à priori* reasoning. Because God is essentially good and kind, therefore it is His uncreated and infinite goodness and kindness which does good to all, and pardons and spares all, just as it is the property of fire to give heat, and of the sun to give light. Thus the Church prays, "O God, whose nature and property it is to have mercy and to forgive, &c."

*But the same servant . . . a hundred pence.* This would amount to about four pounds of English money. See here the narrowness and covetousness of the human breast as compared with the largeness and liberality of the heart of God.

Verse 29. *And his fellow servant*, &c. He humbles himself before his fellow servant, and asks him to forgive him *the hundred pence*, in the self-same words with which that fellow servant had

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obtained from his master the remission of one hundred and twenty millions of crowns. But it was all in vain.

*But he would not*, &c. Greedily and rigidly does this servant stand upon his rights. And thus using them, he abused them, being unmindful of the mercy and clemency which the Lord had shewn to himself. Therefore he provoked the rigour of the justice of the same Lord against himself, and in fact had to suffer it.

*So when his fellow servants*, &c. This has to do with the adornment of the parable. For thus servants act in the houses of their masters, and in courts of princes. But this does not apply to the thing signified by this parable. For the saints and the blessed do not carry to God, or accuse the cruelty, or the sins of men, but rather excuse and cover them, and pray for them.

Verses 32, 33. *Then his Lord*, &c., *had pity on thee.* Arab. *according to my mercy towards thee.* My mercy towards thee ought to have been the stimulus and the measure of the mercy which thou shouldst have shewn to thy fellow-servant. Measure I say, not equal, but proportional. For as I remitted ten thousand talents, it was thy duty to remit a hundred pence.

*Was wroth:* Syriac, *burnt with anger: the tormentors.* It appears from history, and from the civil law of the Romans, to whom at that time the Jews were subject, that debtors were accustomed to be delivered by their creditors to tormentors, who cast them into prison, and scourged them. The Emperor Constantine I. out of Christian benignity abolished the punishment of scourging debtors with scourges loaded with lead. Moreover, tormentors are demons, says Remigius, who torment souls of sinners in hell in a thousand ways. *Until he should pay, i. e.*, he must be tormented for ever. For he could never pay that debt of ten thousand talents. So Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact.

It may here be asked—Is then every fault and its penalty which has been remitted by God to a penitent sinner reimposed by Him on account of such ingratitude and mercilessness? For that seems to be asserted in this parable.

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I say, 1. This parable is true *in foro humano*, juridically, and in a parabolic manner, especially because civil right granted to a donee may be rescinded by the donor on account of ingratitude. For so great would be the feeling among men with respect to the pride and cruelty of the wicked servant of the parable, that every one would think he deserved to pay and atone for his former debts and sins, not as though what had been forgiven revived, but because they were all virtually included in his subsequent cruelty. And thus we see princes inflict punishment upon those who had offended them, and whom they had afterwards spared, if they subsequently carry themselves in an arrogant and ungrateful manner towards them. They exact the penalty of all their previous offences. Whence they are considered to have only conditionally pardoned them, the pre-supposed condition being that they shall amend, and be grateful, and carry themselves modestly.

I say, 2. That all this does not find a counterpart *in foro divino*, and in the thing signified by the parable. For God does not reimpose upon the sinner whom He has forgiven and who will not forgive his fellow men their trespasses against him, the sins which He has before forgiven. The reason is because God in His infinite clemency, forgives sins not conditionally, but absolutely and irrevocably to the penitent, according to the words, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." *Rom.* xi. 29. Wherefore although the sinner who has been the object of pardoning grace, again fall into the same, or other sins, and will not forgive his neighbour, and thus proves himself ungrateful to God, yet does not the circumstance of this ingratitude so aggravate his sin, that on account of it all sins which have been already forgiven by God, are again imputed to him. For since God is the chief Goodness and Holiness, He cannot recall and set up afresh, sin which has once been done away. I may add that this ingratitude is not a peculiar sin, but only a general circumstance of all sin. General, I say, because in all and every sin there is a certain amount of ingratitude towards God. Wherefore in the court of the most good and merciful God this ingratitude does not aggravate the sin to which it is attached in the same way that it

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aggravates it at an earthly tribunal, among men. Wherefore the similitude and comparison of the parable are not to be sought for in this, but in the way in which Christ applies the parable in verse 35, viz., that God will not forgive the offences of those who do not forgive their neighbours, those offences I say, which they have in other ways contracted, or which they contract by their refusal to forgive others, or by their cruelty towards their neighbour. Wherefore sins which have been once forgiven by God are forgiven for ever, nor are they in any case recalled by God. So Theologians teach with S. Thomas, (3. *p. q.* 88. *art.* 1 *and* 3).

I say 3. These things are true, but not sufficient. They do not exhaust the whole scope and force of the parable. For in it it is expressly declared, *And the lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors until he should pay all the debt*—that is to say, the ten thousand talents which had been already remitted. And it is subjoined, *So also will My Heavenly Father do likewise unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses;* namely, He will recall all your past sins which have been already forgiven, even as the lord recalled the past debt of his servant which had been already remitted.

This remitted debt, therefore, and sin is said to be recalled and to return, through that subsequent mercilessness and ingratitude. 1. Because this want of mercy is a deadly sin; for to be unwilling to forgive our neighbour a fault, is to cherish hatred, anger, and revenge against him, which is clearly mortal sin. And thus by this means the former state of sin and liability to hell returns. For he who will not forgive is a debtor to the wrath of God in the same way that he was previously, on account of other sins. For this sin is irremissible, because so long as a man will not forgive his neighbour for a trespass against himself, so long will not God forgive him his own faults. In this very way, therefore, that a similar new sin of mercilessness is committed, by means of it, in a kind of way, past offences against God seem to live again, because the state of sin and the liability to hell live again.

2. Because this ingratitude is a great aggravation of sin, and that

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in a deadly manner, if we believe Soto (*in* 4 *dist.* 32, *art.* 3), who asserts that it must be mentioned by a penitent in confession. Others take a milder view—that the circumstance of ingratitude aggravates the sin to which it is attached, only venially. For this ingratitude attaches itself to all sin. Theologians teach that it is especially to be discerned and taken account of in four kinds of sins; namely, hatred, apostasy, obstinacy and impenitence. For these four are directly repugnant to the very essence of the remission of sins; that is to say, either to faith, or charity, or repentance.

3. Although this ingratitude be not in itself mortal sin, yet it is often a cause of mortal sin. For God, on account of this ingratitude, withdraws the more plentiful supply of His grace from the sinner, and permits him to be more severely tempted by the flesh and the devil. Hence it comes to pass that he falls into more dreadful mortal sins, by which that former multitude of faults returns, which is signified by the *ten thousand talents*. God will require of him as much as the former debt amounted to, because of his want of mercy; although the debt may be of other sins than those which had been remitted, that the words may be fulfilled, "He shall have judgment without mercy, who hath shewed no mercy." (James ii. 13.)

Verse 35: *So also shall*, &c. *From your hearts:* from the very bottom of your heart. For there are many who forgive with their lips, but not with their hearts. Christ, therefore, bids that the gall of rancour be cast out of the heart, and the honey of love substituted in its place. This parable, therefore, teaches how dreadful it is to keep anger and revenge against our neighbours in our minds; and, on the other hand, how pleasing it is to God to lay them aside, and convert them into love, even as God receives the penitent sinner to His grace and the bowels of His love, and buries in oblivion all his past offences, even as though they had never been committed. Moreover, not once, but *seventy times seven*—that is, always—must we forgive our neighbour who repents of the offence which he has committed against us. In order to show this, Christ spake the parable of the *Ten Thousand Talents*—that is, of a very vast debt.

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Let us, therefore, who are but weak men, imitate God, who forgives us our daily offences against Him, and those very many and very grievous, as often as we repent. And therefore He bids us pray daily, Forgive us our debts, even as we forgive them that are indebted to us.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

2 *Christ healeth the sick:* 3 *answereth the Pharisees concerning divorcement:* 10 *sheweth when marriage is necessary:* 13 *receiveth little children:* 16 *instructeth the young man how to attain eternal life,* 20 *and how to be perfect:* 23 *telleth his disciples how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,* 27 *and promiseth reward to those that forsake anything to follow him.*

AND it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan;

2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

3 ¶ The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female,

5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

10 ¶ His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

11 But he said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given.

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

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13 ¶ Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

16 ¶ And behold one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19 Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

23 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

27 ¶ Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

30 But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first.

*And it came to pass*, &c. This is the same history as that related by S. Mark (x. 1), by S. Luke (ix. 51), and, as it would seem, by S. John (vii. 1). So Jansen, Francis Lucas, and others. Maldonatus, however, denies this with respect to S. John: but his arguments will be refuted by the exposition of the context. It is plain from John that these events took place about the Feast of Tabernacles, which was celebrated in September. Christ went up to that feast, that He

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might gradually prepare Himself for death. He was crucified in the following March. Luke adds, that Christ journeyed through Samaria. Hence it follows, that Christ—leaving the direct route from Samaria to Jerusalem—proceeded to the Jordan; and having crossed it, passed through Peræa and entered the borders of Judea from the east, and arrived at Jerusalem about the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles, as John has (vii. 14). This explains the expression, *beyond Jordan*, in the text. *Beyond*, or *across Jordan*, must be connected with the verb *came*, not with the words *coasts of Judea*, as is plain from Mark. For Christ, about the borders of Judea, crossed over the Jordan, that He might be farther away from the observation of the Pharisees, when He was teaching and healing the multitudes.

*Great multitudes followed Him*, &c. Not so much from Galilee—where He wished His journey to escape observation, as Mark and John say—as from the other districts through which He passed. *He healed them there. There—i.e.*, on the confines of Judea; and then sent them back to their homes. For He did not wish to enter Jerusalem with so great a crowd of people, that He might not give the Pharisees an opportunity of accusing Him of sedition, and stirring up the people.

*The Pharisees also*, &c. They had no doubt (from Deut. xxiv. 1) that this was allowable for any grave cause. So Origen, SS. Jerome and Bede. *Came*, not when Jesus proceeded from the confines of Judea to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles (see John vii. 1), but after the feast was over, and He was returning to the borders of Judea and had again crossed the Jordan. This is plain from John x. 40; for Matthew passes over in silence both the going to Jerusalem and the return from thence. John's words are as follow: *And He went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John was first baptizing.* This was Œnon, near to Salim (John iii. 23). This question, concerning the putting away a wife, seems to have been very hotly debated in the time of Christ, just as it is now. Therefore the Pharisees proposed it to Him, that they might tempt Him, and find an occasion for carping at Him. For if Christ should say, It is not lawful to put away a wife, He would incur the hatred



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of many rich and carnal men who made a practice of divorce. But if, on the other hand, He should assert that divorce is lawful, then they were ready to insinuate that His doctrine was imperfect and carnal—His doctrine, I say, Who professed to be the teacher of spiritual perfection, the Doctor sent from Heaven. The Abyssinians at the present day, like the Jews, frequently put away their wives, and marry others. Indeed, they sometimes take them only for a month, or a year.

*He answered*, &c. Some think from this passage that Adam was created a hermaphrodite, and had in himself both sexes. But away with such puerilities. The meaning is as follows: Since Holy Scripture did not say in the case of other animals (Gen. i. 27), that God made them male and female, but only as regards man, by this it is signified that it is only the marriage of the human race, and that of one male with one female, which was instituted by God. This union or marriage between Adam and Eve was so ordained that he could not put her away and marry another. So SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, Theophylact, Euthymius. Again, from the fact that of one Adam two persons were made, namely Adam and Eve, and because Eve was formed from Adam, it is shown that monogamy is right, viz., that a wife ought not to be separated from her husband, forasmuch as she is a part and a member of him. For as Plato says (*Dial. de amore*), "As it were of two imperfect parts one perfect man is formed." As therefore a member, such as the head, cannot be separated from a man, as to its origin and formation, so ought the marriage of one man and one woman to be perpetual and indissoluble, so that it can only be dissolved by death, even as the head can only be separated from the body by death. Wherefore Our Lord adds by way of explanation, *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife.* Plato, and from him S. Basil (*lib. de Virginit.*), adds that this is the cause why a man seeks a wife, as it were a part cut off from himself; and as a magnet attracts iron, so does a woman a man.

*And said*, viz., God, by the mouth of Adam, as a prophet, instituting marriage with Adam and Eve. *For this cause:* Because the

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woman being formed out of the man becomes flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. *Shall be joined*, Greek, προσκολληθήσεται, *i.e.*, *shall be agglutinated*, shall adhere closely and undividedly to his wife, by the most close and intimate bond of matrimony, and that leaving the society and often the home of his father and mother, he may dwell with his wife.

*And there shall be two in one flesh.* (Vulg.) Greek, εἰς σάρκα μίαν, *i.e.*, *into one flesh.* This is commonly expounded of corporeal union. But it is better to take it more simply and purely as a Hebraism, signifying one human being, one civil person. For, by synecdoche *flesh* denotes the whole man. As therefore such a part of the body as the heart ought not to be separated from the body, so ought not a man to be separated from his wife. From hence it follows, *moraliter*, that a man and his wife ought so to love one another as the heart and the soul love the body to which they belong, and the body loves them. (See Eph. v. 28.) Again, from hence it follows that there is a common power over either body, that a man should have the same power over his wife's body that he has over his own, and, *vice versa*, as the Apostle teaches (1 Cor. vii. 4). I have said more on this subject in Gen. ii. 24.

*No more twain . . . . joined*, Greek συνέζευξε, *i.e.*, has yoked together, as in one yoke, whence married people are called σύζυγες, because as two horses are coupled together by one yoke in a chariot, that they may draw it, so are two spouses coupled together by the one yoke of matrimony, that they may sustain it, and by it procreate, and bring up offspring. There is a twofold reason by which Christ proves that a man ought not to put away his wife. 1. A man's putting away his wife is contrary to nature, just as it is contrary to nature that one flesh and one man should be divided into two. 2. This divorce is contrary to the ordinance of God. If therefore it be done, it is done impiously, because what God hath joined together is torn asunder. Who dares to annul what God has sanctioned? Who dares to divide what God has united? Who dares to mutilate the work of God the Creator, to tear asunder one man? Falsely therefore saith Erasmus on 1 Cor. vii. "What is rightly joined



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together is what God hath united. God separateth what is rightly separated." As though marriages improperly and inconsiderately entered into without God's instigation might be set aside. For Christ speaks of nature, and the natural and primary institution of marriage, according to which marriage being once contracted in any way whatsoever, and by whomsoever as instigator, it is indissoluble. For nature requires this, that offspring may continuously be propagated by matrimony, and be advantageously brought up by both parents. This bringing up is, in the human race, a work of difficulty, and of long continuance, lasting up to the twentieth year of a child's age, and sometimes longer. It is otherwise with beasts, which in a few months, or weeks come to adolescence, so that they do not longer require a father or mother's care. Wherefore their marriage is then dissolved. There is then an *à priori* reason why the indissolubility of marriage belongs to the *jus naturæ*, and why fornication, pollution, divorce, and polygamy are contrary to that law. It is because God, who is the Lord of nature and of marriage, and of our bodies, so ordained at the very beginning of the world, and gave the right and use of our bodies only in the union of wedlock. And if we use them in any other way, we abuse our bodies contrary to the will of God, who is the Supreme Lord; and contrary to the law which He has ordained. That this is so appears from this, that in the Mosaic law God allowed a dispensation by which a new law was introduced which gave permission for polygamy, and a bill of divorce. Thus Hosea, by God's command married a wife who had been a fornicatrix. Moreover the end and the cause why God ordained this absolute indissolubility of marriage, is, 1. That there may be closer union and greater mutual love between those who are married. 2. For the sake of the better bringing up of children. The 3rd reason is an allegorical one: because marriage is a type and figure of the indissoluble Union of the Divine WORD with our flesh, and through it with the Church. As the Apostle teaches us (Eph. v. 32), "This is a great sacrament. I speak concerning Christ and the Church." (*Vulg.*)

Verse 7. *They say*, &c. The Pharisees object to Christ. *Why*

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*hath Moses commanded?* In order to make their objection the stronger, they use the word *command*, whereas Moses, as Christ observes in the following verse, only *permitted* the bill of divorce. It was only that sort of command which is conditional, not absolute. Moses had commanded that if the Jews would put away their wives, they could only do so by giving a writing of divorcement. I have fully entered into every thing connected with this bill of divorce on Deut. iv. 1. We must here supply from S. Mark x. 3, 4, that when the Pharisees asked Christ whether it were lawful to put away a wife, He first answered and said unto them, "what did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away." Thus Christ as Matthew here has it in the fourth verse unfolds the original institution of marriage by God, and its indissolubility. Then the Pharisees rejoined, *Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put her away?* Jesus answered, Moses permitted this because of the hardness of your hearts. But it was not so from the beginning. Thus by prefixing the words in Mark, and affixing those in Matthew, we show the agreement of the two Evangelists.

Verse 8. *Moses suffered.* He alters *commanded* into *suffered*, or *permitted.* Moses suffered you to put away your wives, when you hated them, lest if you could not divorce them, you should kill them. For so great was the hardness and carnality of your hearts that ye would rather put them to death than be without the pleasure of a new and desired marriage.

*From the beginning.* When man's nature had become corrupted by sin, man changed and corrupted this institution of God, and gave occasion for divorce and polygamy.

Verse 9. *But I say*, &c. Christ used those words upon two occasions. 1. Publicly in this place to the Jews and the Pharisees. When He here promulgated His new law, by which He revoked the power of giving a bill of divorce, and brought back marriage to its primeval institution and indissolubility. 2. Shortly afterwards He repeated the words in private to his disciples. (Mark x. 10, 11, 12.)

*I say*, i.e., I enact, and as the Lawgiver of the New Law, I

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ordain, and bring back marriage to its original rectitude and steadfastness. And I declare that whosoever shall put away his wife and shall marry another shall be accounted, and shall be in fact an adulterer.

*Except for fornication.* That is, except on account of adultery. For what in those who are free is fornication, in the married is adultery. And this dissolves marriage *quoad thorum*, though not *quoad vinculum*. For the adulterer does not keep the faith which he gave to his spouse. Whence he may be put away by his spouse, according to the saying, "With him who has broken troth, let troth be broken."

From this exception, the Greeks, according to the testimony of Guido the Carmelite (*Tract. de Hæresibus*), and modern heretics gather and conclude that if *whoso putteth away his wife except for fornication, and marry another, committeth adultery;* then, on the contrary, whosoever shall put away his wife on account of fornication, and shall marry another, does *not* commit adultery. Whence they are of opinion that marriage is dissolved by adultery, not only *quoad thorum*, but *quoad vinculum*, that under such circumstances a man may contract another marriage. Thus Luther, Calvin, Erasmus, and speaking generally, the Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, and among Catholics, Catharinus, and Cajetan. And so in practice the Greeks and heretics act. But this is an error condemned by the perpetual tradition of the Church, and by S. Paul (Rom. vii. 1, and 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11), and expressly by the Council of Trent (*Sess. 24. Con.* 6, 7). To the argument deduced *à contrario*, Paul of Burgos, on this passage, (*additione 2. ad Lyran.*) replies by admitting the consequence, but adds that Christ was speaking only of the Old Law, in which on account of fornication a bill of divorce was allowed to be given. But there is this difficulty in such a reply, that Christ both here and in the fifth of Matthew expressly opposes His own words, that is the evangelical Law, to Moses and the Old Law; in fact He repeals that bill of divorce which Moses had allowed. Verses 8 and 9. "He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was

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not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Observe how plainly Christ opposes His own word to the sanction which Moses had given to the bill of divorce, and how He condemns whosoever makes use of it, as guilty of adultery.

I say therefore that it is better with S. Augustine (*lib.* 1. *de adult. conjug. c.* 9.) to take the word *except* negatively, so that the expression, *save for the cause of fornication*, means the same thing as *apart from the cause of fornication*. This is supported by the Greek and Syriac which have, *not an adulteress*. As though Christ only intended to affirm that a chaste and faithful wife might not be put away, but intended to say nothing about an adulterous wife, in order to escape the hatred of the Pharisees and the people, who were at that time used to divorce.

2. The word *except*, can be taken in its proper, exceptive sense, but it should be referred not to the words which immediately follow, *and marry another*, but only to those which preceded, *whosoever shall put away his wife*, so as to make an exception in the case of fornication. Then the words would be taken as follows, *Whosoever shall put away his wife, which is not lawful, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.* The Ethiopic favours this view, translating as follows, *Whosoever, on account of any other cause than on account of fornication, shall put away his wife, and marry another, is an adulterer.* Similarly the Persian, *Every man who puts away his wife, and not on account of adultery, and marries another, is an adulterer.*

3. Most clearly and aptly from Theophylact and Augustine (*lib. cont. Adamant, c.* 3), you may refer this exception to both what precedes and what follows. Thus, Whoso shall put away his wife, unless for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. He commits adultery, I say, both by putting away his wife, as well as by marrying another. That is, he is twice an adulterer. Christ gives an answer to both the questions put to Him, for the Pharisees had asked

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two. And both answers are true. For even though a man should only divorce a chaste wife, without marrying another, he commits adultery, both because he breaks the law of marriage, by violating one of its conditions by putting away an innocent wife, as well as by causing her to commit adultery, as Christ explains in Matthew v. 32. For verbs of the Hebrew conjugation *Kal*, often in *Hiphil*, signify the double action as above. This is well known to Hebrew scholars. Whence from the contrary you can only infer as follows, *Whoso shall put away his wife unless for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery.* Therefore he who puts away his wife on account of fornication, and marries another, does not indeed commit adultery by divorcing the adulteress, but by marrying another. It is the same form of expression as if you should say, "He who breaks his fast without a dispensation, and gets drunk, commits sin. Therefore he who does not fast, having a dispensation, does not sin by eating, but sins by getting drunk."

I say, 2. Christ here concedes divorce to a man on account of the fornication of his wife, *quoad thorum*, but not the dissolution of marriage, so that he may marry another. This appears, 1. because Mark and Luke lay down a general proposition, and omit this exception. This is what Luke says, xvi. 18: "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." For he does her a great wrong, breaking the troth which he had given her.

You will say, why then does Matthew add this exception? I answer, because the Pharisees had virtually proposed two questions to Christ. The first was, whether it was lawful for any cause to divorce a wife? The second, whether when a wife was put away by a bill of divorce, the marriage was dissolved, and another might be entered upon? For they put away their wives that they may marry again. Christ then replies to both questions; and as it seems by means of two propositions. 1. Whoso shall put away his wife except for fornication, commits adultery. 2. Whoso shall marry another, commits adultery. For together with the bill of divorce he abolishes poly-

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gamy, which had hitherto been allowed. The pronoun *whosoever* must be repeated. Matthew, here as elsewhere studying conciseness, throws two sentences of Christ, each with its *whosoever*, into one. Hence that saying is true, "I labour to be brief, I become obscure." The same thing is proved, 2. by what precedes, when Christ by the original institution of marriage, which fornication does not annul, proves that matrimony is altogether indissoluble. 3. Because in what follows, this exception is not to be understood, as if it were said, *And he who shall marry her that is put away, except for fornication, commits adultery.* For so she that is put away on account of fornication would be in a better position, with respect to another contract of marriage, than an innocent woman who has been divorced. 4. Because S. Paul so teaches (1 Cor. vii., 10, 11), and the Fathers *passim.* SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, Bede, in this passage, S. Augustine in his two Books on Adultery, Innocent I. (*Epist. ad Exuper.*) Concil. Milev. (*Can.* 17). Forojuliense (*Canon* 10), Nannetense (*Can.* 10), Florentin. (*in instruct. Armeniens.*) Trident. (*Sess.* 14, *Can.* 6). Origen, in this passage (*Tract.* 7), animadverts severely upon certain bishops of his time, for conceding with Tertullian (*lib.* 4, *cont. Marc.*) and Ambrosiaster (*in Cor.* vii.), second nuptials to wives on account of the adultery of their husbands, saying that it is lawful for the innocent spouse to put away an adulterous partner, and to marry another. The same license is given by the Council of Illiberis. (31 *quæst.* 1 *cap. Si qua mulier.*) Also *in Concil. Aurelian* 1, *cap.* 10. But the decrees of those Councils are either apocryphal, or else are cited imperfectly by Gratian.

Ver. 10. *His disciples say*, &c. *Case*, i.e., *matter, business.* So the Syriac translates, *If the case of those who are married be thus*, if the indissolubility of marriage be so great, if a man be so strictly bound to his wife, that he cannot put her away for anything except fornication, but must live with her, though she be odious, quarrelsome, deformed, nasty, and so on, and must have close connection with her until death, *it is better not to marry a wife*, as the Syriac has it. For the Greek γαμῆσαι applies both to men and women. It may be that the Vulgate in translating by *nubere*, alludes to the servitude and

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subjection, by which a man is bound to a woman, and not seldom, if he wishes to have quietness, must give in to her, and bear patiently her complaints, quarrels, and reproaches. S. Chrysostom gives the reason: "It is easier to fight against concupiscence and ourselves than against a bad woman." Whence Cato said, "A wife is a necessary evil." Hence too the illustrious Sir Thomas More, who suffered martyrdom under Henry VIII. of England, being asked why he had married a little wife, replied sportively, "Of evils I chose the least." So Stapleton in his life.

Ver. 11. *To whom it is given:* Arabic, *those who are given*, viz., to God and continence. So in Religious Orders those who are converted are called *given*, *i.e.*, to religion.

*Do not receive:* Origen and Nazianzen (*Orat.* 31.) translate Χωροῦσι *are not capable.* And by capacity they mean a natural inclination to celibacy, which all have not. But it is better to translate with the Vulgate *do not receive*, or contain. As it were, narrow vessels do not receive into them, do not embrace so arduous a counsel as that of celibacy, but only those to whom is given by God this great gift of continency. Where observe, although all the faithful may not have the gift of continency, so that they have continence *in act*, as all the just have not the gift of perseverance, by which they actually persevere in justice, yet all the just have the gift of perseverance in such sense, that they may, if they will, persevere in God's grace. Thus in like manner all the faithful have the gift of continence in the first instance. And by it they may contain if they will; viz., if they assiduously beg of God the grace of continence, and if they co-operate with that grace by guarding their eyes, by fleeing from sloth, and so on. Thus SS. Chrysostom, Origen, Theophylact, Euthymius, Jerome in this place, S. Augustine (*in Psalm* 138), S. Ambrose (*lib.* 3, *de Viduis*), Tertullian (*lib. de Monog.*), and others. Christ in this place, as well as S. Paul (1 *Cor.* vii. 7), gives the counsel of continence to every believer. For nothing is counselled except what is in man's power and good pleasure with God's grace, which truly He offers and provides for all who ask it. It is otherwise with the gifts of prophecy, tongues, healing, miracles. For the grace of these God does not offer

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to every one, but only to a few of His elect for the common good of the faithful. Listen to S. Jerome, "It is given to those who have wished, who have laboured that they may receive." So, too, Euthymius says, "It is given to those who ask, but not for mere asking, but to those who ask fervently and perseveringly. What is meant is that virginity is a gift of God, given to those who ask for it as they ought to ask." So also *Auctor Imperfecti*, "When He says, to whom it is given, it is not meant that it is given to some and not to others, but He shows that unless we receive the help of grace, we have no power at all of ourselves. But grace is not refused to those who desire, for the Lord says, Ask and ye shall have." And S. Chrysostom, "If it is a work of election, wherefore is it that He immediately said, *All do not receive it*, &c.? It is that you may learn thoroughly the peculiar nature of this warfare, that it is not like a kind of necessity bestowed as it were at random. It is given to those who freely choose it. He spoke as He did in order that He might show the necessity of grace from above—which grace is provided for all who seek it, if we would come forth victors in this warfare." S. Chrysostom adds that we ought not to be slothful in our resolution of continence, because some may fall from continence. Since soldiers falling in battle do not discourage their comrades, but rather stir them up to fight more valiantly. Lastly, the same S. Chrysostom suggests a consideration, by means of which celibacy is shown to be not only possible but easy to every one. "Consider with thyself," he says, "that if thou wert a eunuch, either by nature, or by the wrong-doing of man, thou wouldst be deprived of these pleasures, and wouldst obtain no reward by being deprived of them. Give thanks therefore to God, because thou wilt obtain great rewards and bright crowns, if thou livest thus as they do without any rewards at all. Yea, indeed thou mayest do it much more easily, safely and pleasantly than they can, both because thou art strengthened by the hope of recompense, and because thou rejoicest in the consciousness of thy virtue, and art not tossed by such vast billows of desire. For the cutting off a member is not like the bridle of reason: yea

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verily, it is reason alone which restrains such waves as these we are speaking of. For I should not say that this sting of desire proceeds from the brain, or from the loins, but from a lascivious mind, and from neglecting to watch over the thoughts."

Ver. 12. *There are eunuchs*, &c. Who when they might be husbands, become eunuchs for Christ's sake, says S, Jerome. Christ here speaks of three sorts of eunuchs. 1. Those who are such by nature. 2. Those who have been made eunuchs artificially, that they may guard queens and noble matrons. 3. Those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven's sake. Christ here alludes to Isaiah lvi. 3, 4, 5, where the prophet foretells that there should be such eunuchs in Christ's church, and promises them a name better than of sons and daughters, yea an everlasting name.

*Made themselves eunuchs:* This expression has two meanings. 1. That it is in our power with God's grace to make ourselves eunuchs, *i.e.*, chaste and celibate, and to keep so by a perpetual vow. This is the force of the verb, *have made themselves*, signifying a moral inability to beget children. If it were not so, He would have said, There are who make themselves eunuchs, or who endeavour to do so. But he says, *have made themselves*, i.e., have taken from themselves the power of generating, that is to say by a vow of continence. So S. Epiphan. (*Hæres.* 58), S. Fulgentius (*lib. de fide ad Pet.*).

Origen took these words literally. He mutilated himself out of his love of chastity. But he was wrong in doing so, both because such self-mutilation is unlawful, as well as because lust is not thereby quenched but inflamed. Hear S. Chrysostom: "When He says, *Have made themselves eunuchs*, He does not speak of the cutting off of members, but of the suppression of evil thoughts. For he who mutilates himself renders himself liable to a curse. Neither is concupiscence thereby assuaged, but is made more troublesome." For eunuchs sin in thought, through the desire of lust, grieving that they cannot fulfil it. See what I have said on Eccles. xx. 2, and xxxix. 21.

*For the kingdom of Heaven's sake*, that by continence they may merit it. So Origen, Hilary, Chrysostom, Euthymius, and S. Augustine (*de Virgin. cap.* 23). Falsely, therefore, do the heretics expound

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*for the kingdom of Heaven's sake* to mean for the sake of preaching. As though it meant, There are some who abstain from marriage that they may be more free to preach the Gospel, or that they may be free from the anxieties which matrimony brings with it. For continence is not only to be praised and desired for such reasons as those, but for its own sake; because it is a great virtue, and because the victory over himself, by which a man overcomes lust, raises his mind to meditate upon and follow after heavenly things. Wherefore chastity makes men angels.

*He that is able*, &c.; Arabic, *He that is able to carry it, let him carry it.* Note here the evangelical counsel of celibacy, proposed, yea counselled, by Christ to all men, though not commanded. For these words, *he that is able*, &c., are those of one exhorting and animating to celibacy, say SS. Jerome and Chrysostom. Moreover, it is signified that as Christ gives this counsel, it is in our power to fulfil it, if we will invoke the grace of God, and co-operate with grace. Nor does the expression *he that is able* do away with the force of this; for all that this means is, that continence is a difficult thing. And he who is willing to put constraint upon himself, generously to withstand lust, to mount up to the lofty pinnacle of continence; let such an one embrace the same, *let him receive it.* All the faithful, then, have the power of continence, not proximate, but remote. So the Fathers already cited on verse 11. Hear S. Chrysostom, speaking in the name of all: "All, therefore, cannot receive it, because all do not wish. The palm is set before them: he who desires glory does not think of the labour. No one would conquer if all were afraid of danger." Hear, too, S. Jerome (*lib.* 1, *cont. Jovinian*): "The master of the games proposes the reward. He invites to the course. He holds in His hand the prize of virginity. He points to the most pure fountain, and chants, Whoso thirsteth, let him come unto Me and drink. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." From these things it appears how foolish and carnal is Calvin's exposition, which is as follows: "You, O ye Apostles, think that it is a good thing to live without a wife; but I forbid any one to attempt so to do unless he is certain that he can live

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without a wife." For Christ does not forbid celibacy, but exhorts to it. Neither can any one be certain that he has the gift, except either he have a revelation from God—which is given to very few—or else by experience has had proof of his own continence. And how can a man be certain about his continence before he has made the trial? Still worse is what Luther taught—that it is as impossible for a man to be without a wife as to be without food or drink. No doubt it is impossible for the heretics, but not for the orthodox, who are strengthened by faith and the grace of Christ.

*Then were brought* (Vulg., *were offered*) *to Him. Rebuked*—because they thought Christ was occupied with more important matters, such as instructing men; and that He must not be called off to attend to little children, as not having the use of reason; and that it was unworthy so great a prophet to busy Himself about children. For *little children* Luke has (xviii. 15) *βρέφη, infants.* But infancy lasts until the seventh year.

*Moraliter:* let princes here learn from Christ, Who is the King of kings and Lord of lords, to make themselves accessible to the poor, to women and children, and graciously to hear and grant their supplications and requests. This was done by several of the Roman emperors, even of those who were heathens. Such was Titus, who, as Suetonius testifies, was wont to say, "No one ought to go away sorrowful after talking with a prince." And on the day when he had not done a kindness to any one, he groaned and said, "Alas! I have lost a day." Next there was Trajan, of whom Pliny says in his *Panegyric*, "Thou dost not suffer citizens to embrace thy feet, nor return a kiss with thine hand. All who approach thee come close to thy side; and it is their own sense of modesty, not thy haughtiness, which puts an end to the conference." And, a little afterwards: "There is no difficulty in obtaining an audience, there is no delay in giving an answer: forthwith they are heard, forthwith they receive a reply." Then there was Alexander Severus, of whom Lampridius says: "So great was his moderation, that no one was ever removed from his side; he made himself so bland and affable to all men, that he used to visit not only his friends of the first and second ranks,

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but the sick of even a lower degree." Lastly, of the Christian emperors, Pacatus says to Theodosius in his Panegyric, "When the people are waiting for you, you make it plain not only that you are willing to be seen, but easy of approach. You receive from him who is nearest to you the petitions of all your people."

*That He would put His hands;* that by this imposition of hands He might bless them, and so implore Divine grace for them, that they might grow up to be wise and holy men. That this was an ancient practice of the Hebrews is gathered from Gen. xlviii. 14, where Jacob—extending his arms in such a way as to form the figure of a cross—blessed the two young sons of Joseph. See also Ecclus. iii. 11: "The blessing of a father strengthens the house of sons; but the curse of a mother roots out their foundations." From Christ has been derived the custom among Christians, that lay people, and especially children, should ask a blessing from their elders and from priests. This is the case in Belgium, where boys will run up to the priests and religious men, and ask them to sign them with the sign of the cross. They are taught to do this both by the catechists and by their parents. Remigius says this was a custom among the Jews before the time of Christ. The great Sir Thomas More, the glory of England and a martyr, when he was Lord High Chancellor, publicly asked his aged father to give him his blessing, as Stapleton testifies. Moreover, the Church uses this ceremony of imposition of hands in Baptism, Orders, Penance, and whenever heretics are received into the Church. It is to pray for and obtain the gift of the Holy Ghost.

*But Jesus said,* &c. Victor of Antioch mentions five natural endowments why Christ has so great a love for the little ones. "The mind of a child is pure, and free from all vicious passions. It does not remember injuries, nor meditate upon revenge. In like manner, although a child may be severely chastised by its mother, yet will it run to her before any one else, and is attached to her more than to any other woman. And if you should show it a queen with a diadem upon her head, in no wise would it prefer her to its mother clothed in rags. It would rather see its mother clothed in rags than a queen

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in her royal apparel. Then a child requires nothing more than nature demands. Thus as soon as it is satisfied, it leaves its mother's breasts. Moreover it is never grieved at the loss of those things, of which we make so great account, such as money and jewels. Lastly, it is not carried away by corporeal beauty, as other human beings are. Wherefore the Lord said, *Of such is the kingdom of Heaven.* Assuredly by them does He admonish us, that we should do such things by the firm choice of our own will, which little children do by natural endowment." (*On Mark* x. 13.) Thus Christ chose out and blessed when they were children, S. Edmund, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, S. Nicholas, S. Catharine of Siena, and other eminent saints. When Gelasius was a boy he found his little brother, S. Ophilus, praying in his chamber, and a company of angels talking with him. He saw them with his own eyes, and heard a voice saying, *Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.* As he became older he grew in holiness, and like a fruitful olive tree in the house of the Lord, he brought forth abundant fruit, and thus in his early youth, he passed to Christ. S. Babylas, Patriarch of Antioch, and an illustrious martyr under the Emperor Numerianus, being by him condemned to death, desired that three boys, whom he had brought up in faith and piety might be beheaded before him, lest they should be led astray. He offered them to Christ as innocent victims, and said, "Behold I and the children, whom the Lord hath given me for a sign." Thus it is in his *Life* in Surius.

Learn from hence with what care children ought to be brought up, and instructed, that they may remain pure, for "the newly made jar long preserves the savour of what it first contains."

S. Basil proves the advantages of early religious training from these words of Christ. He asks (*in Reg. Disputat. interrog.* 292), "Is it fitting that a master of boys living in the world should be a Brother? He answers in the affirmative. Let the Lord's command be kept, Suffer the little children to come unto Me." For young children go forth amongst the adult members of society, and what they have learnt in youth, they retain in old age. Children are the nursery of the Church and of the commonwealth.

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*Of such*, &c. Syriac, *Of those who are like them.* Whence Luke adds, *Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in nowise enter therein.* Christ's meaning here is as though He said, "It is not beneath My dignity to bless young children, because through My blessing they are made fit for the Kingdom of Heaven, whilst you, O ye adult Jews, who have often heard Me teaching are unfitted for it on account of your pride, and your other vices by which you have become callous. Wherefore in order that ye may become fit, ye must become like unto these little ones." Hear S. Ambrose (*lib.* 8, *in cap.* 18 *Luc.*): "This age is weak in physical strength, and immature in mind and judgment. It is not therefore childhood which is meant, so much as the goodness which emulates childhood's simplicity." And a little afterwards, speaking symbolically, "Who is the child which is to be imitated by the Apostles of Christ? It is He of whom Isaiah speaks, Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. For it is that Child who saith to thee, Take up thy Cross, and follow Me. And that thou mayest recognise who He is—when He was reviled, He reviled not again, when He was smitten, He smote not back. Here is perfect virtue. Therefore there is in childhood a kind of venerable character of old age, and in old age an innocent childhood." From hence it is plain that the Anabaptists are wrong in keeping children away from Baptism, and so from Christ and the kingdom of heaven, on the ground that infants have not the use of reason, and therefore cannot believe. For although they may not have the act of faith, they may have the habit of faith. Because a habit (*habitus*) of faith, and grace and charity is infused into them by Baptism. They believe moreover in act by the faith of the Church, *i.e.*, of their parents, and the faithful of the Church, who often exercise acts of faith on behalf of themselves and all who belong to them.

*And when He had laid*, &c. The hands of Christ conferred life and salvation. The reason is because the hand is the organ of organs. Wherefore the Godhead of Christ exercised His Divine power and grace towards those whom He touched through His hands, giving them health both of body and soul, or increasing the grace given



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them in circumcision, and in other ways, sanctifying them, and offering them to God, and as it were consecrating them. Whence we need not doubt that these young children who were blessed by Christ grew up to be wise and holy men, who afterwards became rulers of Churches, and propagated the faith of Christ. So Francis Lucas.

*And behold one*, &c. S. Jerome thinks that this *one* was the lawyer of whom Luke speaks (x. 25), and so that he came with the intention of tempting Christ. S. Chrysostom's opinion is preferable, that it was a different person, and that he came with a sincere intention of asking how he could become like a little child, according to Christ's precept, and so become a partaker of everlasting life. Wherefore he is the same person who is spoken of in Luke xviii. 18. This becomes plain by a comparison of the two passages, especially ver. 22, where it is said that when he had heard Christ's doctrine concerning perfection, *If thou wilt be perfect go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor*, he went away sorrowful because he was rich. But this is evidence that he had asked these things of Christ from a sincere desire of salvation.

*Good Master*: This is a common Hebrew form of salutation by which persons sought the good will of a doctor or prophet. As though they said, "Rabbi, I know that thou art good, both as a man, and as a doctor and a prophet, who teachest us those things which are indeed good, and which lead to happiness. Tell me therefore what special good thing shall I do, that I may obtain the chief good in Heaven?" He plays upon the word *good*.

Ver. 17. *He said unto Him*, &c. The Vulgate translator read in the Greek, τί με ἐρωτᾷς περὶ ἀγαθοῦ; This was S. Augustine's reading, and that which S. Jerome followed in his commentary. *Why askest thou me concerning good?* The present reading is that given in the text. Origen gives both readings. He subjoins the reason, saying—

*One is good, God:* viz., in His nature and essence. Humbly does Christ refer this praise of His goodness to God, that He may teach us to do the same. For this man had not perfect faith concerning

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Christ, nor did he believe Him to be God. To this faith Christ desired to raise him by chiding him as it were. As though He had said, "If thou callest Me good, believe that I am God: for no one is good of himself save God." So S. Jerome, Theophylact, Euthymius.

Moreover *good* means the same as perfect, and the perfection of a thing is its goodness. That God is perfect, S. Denis proves in many ways (*de Divin. Nomin. c.* 10.) In God there is infinite perfection both of nature and wisdom, of power, holiness and virtue. There is therefore in Him the highest goodness, natural, moral and supernatural. Wherefore He is the Fountain of all good, in whom all the excellencies of all creatures are gathered together, and infinitely more than there are in the creatures. Wherefore in God there is in an eminent degree the beauty of gold, the splendour of jewels, the savour of delicacies, the harmony of music, the pleasantness of gardens, and whatsoever there is lovely, pleasant and delicious in the creatures. Hence it is from God that honey derives its sweetness, the sun its radiance, the stars their light, the heavens their glory, angels their wisdom, men their virtue, animals their sensations, plants their life, and all other things whatsoever they have of good: yea it is to the bounty of God that they as mendicants owe their very existence, as a drop out of the ocean. In God therefore is all good, and that in a perfect and infinite degree. In God is the allurement of all love, the consummation of all desire, the satisfying of all appetite. Why then, O wretched man, dost thou wander about among these poor created goods, and with all art not satisfied? Seek good in Him in whom is all good. Love and desire God. He alone can fully satisfy thy appetite and thy thirst: in this life through grace, but how much more in the life to come through glory: yea by Himself. For in heaven God manifests Himself that He may be beheld by the blessed as the chief good, that they may taste Him and enjoy Him.

*If thou will enter*, &c. Calvin foolishly, if not impiously, imagines that Christ is here addressing the young man ironically, because he trusted in the works of the Law; inasmuch as there is no road to Heaven through the keeping of the commandments, since it is



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impossible for men; but by faith. There are here as many errors and heresies, yea blasphemies, as there are words. It is diametrically opposed to what Christ declares, and is subversive of it. Hence it is plain that Calvin was not led by the Spirit of Christ but of Antichrist. See among Catholics, Maldonatus, who writes with the express object of refuting Calvin and the Protestants. Let us go on to speak of what will be of more use to the orthodox. Christ here teaches that not faith alone justifies and saves, but that good works are also required, by which in fulfilling the law, we may obtain the prize of eternal life, which has been promised by God to those who fulfil the law. Calvin urges—At least Christ by the commandments of God here excludes the precepts and traditions of the Church, of Pontiffs and Prelates. I reply they are included in the fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother." For Prelates are spiritual fathers.

Verse 18. *He saith unto Him*, &c. *As thyself;* Syriac, *as thy soul.* I have expounded these commandments in Deut. v. 6. Christ in this place only propounded the precepts of the second table having reference to our neighbour, because in them are included the precepts of the first table concerning God. For the love of God produces love of our neighbour. For we love him for the sake of God. Wherefore the love of our neighbour flows from love of God. Again it is more difficult to love our neighbour than to love God. For who is there who does not love God, especially among religious people, such as this youth was?

*The young man saith*, &c. *From my youth;* Syriac and Arabic, *from my childhood*—meaning, from a child I have been brought up in God's law, and been prevented by His grace. I have carefully kept all God's commandments. *What lack I yet?* i.e., of goodness: that I may become perfected therein, *and have eternal life?* Not in any fashion, as all have it who keep the commandments, but surely and securely, and in large measure; in the chief and perfect degree of happiness and glory. For Thou, O Christ, as the Master of Heavenly virtue seemest to deliver a higher doctrine concerning it than our Scribes. Tell me therefore what it is? For I covet salva-

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tion and perfection. S. Jerome thinks that this young man told a falsehood, for if he had loved his neighbour as himself, he would have sold all his goods, and given to the poor. But this argument is not absolutely convincing. For to love one's neighbour as oneself is of precept: but to give all one's goods to the poor is of counsel. And Christ, as Mark says, beholding him, loved him, and gave him this advice concerning bestowing all his goods upon the poor, that he might go on to perfection.

*Jesus saith unto him*, &c. This is not an evangelical precept, but a counsel. Whence He saith, *if thou wilt*. This is to say, I do not command, but I advise. Mark adds (x. 21), *Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor*. S. Anthony, hearing these words of Christ read at Mass, left all things, and so followed Christ, says S. Athanasius in his life. S. Prosper of Regium, who was afterwards a bishop, did the same, in the time of S. Leo, as is recorded in his Life in Surius. June. 25.

Deservedly therefore S. Bernard says (*in Declaman. sub initium.*), "These are the words which in all the world have persuaded men to a contempt of the world, and to voluntary poverty. They are the words which fill the cloisters with monks, the deserts with anchorites. These, I say, are the words which spoil Egypt, and strip it of the best of its goods. This is the living and effectual word, converting souls, by the happy emulations of sanctity, and the faithful promise of truth. For Simon Peter saith unto Jesus—Lo we have left all things." Wherefore S. Jerome, by this saying of Christ, as by the sound of a trumpet constantly stirs up his own people, as well as all of us to a zeal for poverty. Whence (*Epist.* 150, *ad Hedib.*), he says, "Dost thou wish to be perfect, and to stand in the first rank of dignity? Then do what the Apostles did. Sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and follow the Saviour; and follow the bare and only cross with virtue for thine only cloke." Still more clearly does the same S. Jerome speak (*Epist.* 24, *ad Julian.*), "And this I exhort, if thou wilt be perfect, if thou desirest the summit of Apostolic dignity, if to raise up the cross and follow Christ, if to take hold of the plough,

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and not to look back, if placed on the top of the house, thou despisest thine old garments, and wouldest escape the Egyptian woman, thy mistress, leaving the world's pallium. Whence also Elias, when he was hastening to the kingdom of Heaven is not able to go with his mantle, but leaves his unclean garments to the world (*mundo immunda vestimenta dimittit.*). But this, thou sayest is a question of Apostolic dignity, and of the man who wishes to be perfect. But why art thou unwilling to be perfect too? Why shouldest not thou who art first in the world, be first also in the family of Christ?" After a little he adds, "But if thou shalt give thyself to the Lord, and being perfect in Apostolic virtue, shalt begin to follow the Saviour, thou shalt then understand where thou art, and how in Christ's army thou holdest the last place."

Observe: Christian perfection chiefly and primarily consists in charity; nevertheless it is placed by Christ in evangelical counsels, as it were means and instruments suitable for acquiring charity. (See *S. Thomas*, ii. 2 *q.* 184, *art.* 3.) This perfection all the religious aim at who renounce all their possessions, that naked they may follow a naked Christ. Yet do not all immediately at the beginning obtain this perfection, but they tend towards it by degrees; and by making continual progress, they at length arrive at it. Hence, wisely does Climacus (*Gradus* 26) make three grades of such persons—namely, beginners, those who are making progress, and the perfect. To beginners he delivers this alphabet, not of twenty-four letters, but of virtues. "The best elementary alphabet of all," he says, "is obedience, fasting, a hair shirt, ashes, tears, confession, silence, humility, vigils, fortitude, cold, fatigue, affliction, contempt, contrition, forgetfulness of injuries, brotherly love, gentleness, a simple and incurious faith, the neglect of the world, the affections kept free from all things, simplicity united with innocence, voluntary vileness." To such as are making progress he assigns these greater precepts of virtues. "The lot and the method of those who are progressing is victory over vain glory and anger, a good hope of salvation, quietness of mind, discretion, a firm and constant remembrance of the Last Judgment, mercy, hospitality, modest reproof, speech free from

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all vicious affections." Lastly, to the perfect he delivers these maxims of complete sanctity: "A heart free from all captivity, perfect love, a fount of humility, the mind's departure from the vanities of the world, and going to Christ, a treasure of light and Divine prayer secure from robbers, abundance of divine illumination, desire of death, hatred of life, and flight from the body." And then he adds that "a perfect man is so holy, and so pleasing to God, that he may be the ambassador, or the patron and advocate of the world, who is able (in a certain sense) to compel God; the colleague of angels, and is with them initiated into mysteries; a most profound depth of knowledge, a habitation of celestial mysteries, a keeper of the Divine arcana, the health of men, a god over devils, a master of vices, an emperor of the body."

*Go, sell*, &c. You will ask, Why is poverty the appropriate way and instrument of evangelical perfection? Bonaventura answers (*in Apol. Pauperum*), because cupidity is the root of all evils. Cupidity, therefore, is the foundation of the city of Babylon. For of it are born ambition, gluttony, and the rest of the vices. This cupidity Christ cuts down by poverty, and takes away riches, honours, delights, which are the food and fuel of all vices. For delicacies make the mind effeminate, and to become women rather than men. A manly strength abhors delicacies. 2. Poverty begets humility, which is the foundation of sanctity. Whence S. Francis, says Bonaventura, being asked by his disciples what virtue would most commend us to Christ the Lord, and make us pleasing to Him, replied (according to his wont): Poverty; for it is the way of salvation, the fount of humility, the root of perfection, and from it there spring many fruits, although they be hidden and known to but few. 3. One who is poor in spirit, since he has no other cares, gives himself wholly up to gathering virtues, as a bee to gathering honey. Thus S. Anthony, being free from the desire of riches, had an insatiable desire of virtues; and so from one man he learned patience, from another abstinence, from another constancy, prayer, and so on. Hence the first poor religious were called *Ascetics*, that is, *exercisers;* because they were wholly occupied in taming anger, gluttony and other passions, and in the

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practice of arduous and heroic virtues. Whence some of them were accustomed to take food only once in two days, others only once in three. Others scarcely slept at all, like those who lived in the monastery of the *Acemetæ—i.e.*, of those who keep vigil without sleeping. 4. Because perfection consists in the love of God and our neighbour; and to this poverty directs us. For it puts an end to *meum* and *tuum*, from whence all the strifes and wars arise among neighbours, says S. Chrysostom. The same removes the mind away from all care and love of earthly things, and fixes it wholly upon God. For what the Apostle says concerning a married man (1 Cor. vii. 33), applies also to a rich man: "He that is married cares for the things of the world, how he may please his wife," and is divided. For the rich man is divided. He divides his cares and his thoughts between God and Mammon. Poverty, therefore, makes a man superior to the world and the flesh, like an angel conversing with angels, breathing after Heaven. And such a one fulfils the words of the Apostle, "Seek those things which are above, not the things that are upon the earth," that he may place his whole mind and love upon God, and may be made with Him, as it were, one spirit. Perfection, therefore, consisteth in this—that the mind be altogether abstracted from transitory things, and fixed on what is good and eternal; that is, on God, for which poverty affords an opportunity.

You will say, for this it is sufficient to leave all things in affection which was what Abraham did, not in act. I answer with S. Jerome against Vigilantius. That is one grade of poverty, and a lower one. For the highest is to relinquish all things in reality, both because such a one gives all, that is to say both intention and its effect, as also because it is not possible wholly to relinquish a thing in intention, without carrying the intention into effect. For like a person lying in a bed, or sitting in a chair, if any one should secretly bind him to the chair he does not know that he is bound, until he gets up: so those who possess riches have their affection hidden, by which they are bound to them, and do not perceive it until they lose them or leave them. Thus S. Gregory records (*Epist. ante lib. Moral.*) how he was deceived by the world. "There was opened to me even then

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that I should seek for the eternal love, but persistent habit had prevailed so that I should not change my outward life."

*Go, sell what thou hast.* From hence the Pelagians taught that no rich man can be saved, unless he sell his property, and give to the poor, and become poor himself. S. Augustine writes against this view (*Epist.* 89. *ad Hilar.*), teaching that this is a counsel not a precept. Whence Pelagius was compelled to retract this error of his, as S. Augustine testifies (*Epist. ad Paulin.*).

There are three tracts which have been recently printed, bearing the name of Pope S. Sixtus. The first is concerning riches, in which the writer would prove from this passage that a believer cannot be saved unless he relinquish them, and become poor. The second is concerning works of faith, in which he teaches that they are necessary to salvation, but that they are works of free will, not of the grace of God. The third concerning chastity, that it is a work of free will, not the gift of God. From all this it is plain that the author of this work is not S. Sixtus, but some Pelagian, as the Louvain doctors and others have rightly perceived.

*Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor:* Mark and Luke add, *all things whatsoever thou hast.* By these words is refuted the error of Vigilantius and Calvin, who teach that it is better and more perfect to keep one's riches, and use them in moderation, and give to the poor according as opportunity serves, than to relinquish them all at once. S. Jerome confutes this error, (*lib. cont. Vigilant.*). For as S. Ambrose says, "It is better to give the tree with its fruit than to give the fruit only." Again, the ascetic, who gives part of his wealth to the poor, and keeps part for himself, is neither fish nor flesh: he neither renounces the world, nor is he a secular. He is a sort of amphibious animal. Whence S. Basil said to one who took up the religious life, but reserved certain things for himself, "Thou hast spoilt a senator, and not made a monk." Such a person does not wholly trust in God, but partly in God, and partly in the riches which he keeps for himself. Whence he is not really and entirely poor in spirit, nor does he free himself from the care, distraction and temptation, which are wont to accompany riches. Wherefore S.

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Anthony commanded a certain person who wished to renounce the world after this sort, that he might reserve something for himself against a time of necessity, to place upon his naked body some pieces of flesh which he had bought. When he had done this, the dogs and birds, which came to snatch at the flesh, lacerated his body all over. Then S. Anthony said, "Thus shall they who do not renounce all things be torn by the devils." (See Rufinus, in *the Lives of the Fathers, lib.* 3, *n.* 68.) Wherefore S. Hilarion, as S. Jerome testifies in his Life, rejected money offered him to distribute among the poor by Orion, out of whom he had cast a legion of devils, and said, "To many the name of poverty is an occasion of covetousness: but mercy has no art. No one spends better than he who reserves nothing for himself." For as S. Leo wisely says about a like matter (*Serm.* 12, *de Quadrages.*), "Through lawful use we pass on to immoderate excess, when from care of the health there creeps in the delectation of pleasure; and the desire of what is sufficient for nature does not satisfy." S. Gregory gives the reason *à priori* (*Hom.* 20, *in Ezech.*), "When any one vows something that is his to God, and something does not vow, that is called *sacrifice*. But when a man vows all that he has, all that he lives, all that he knows, to Almighty God, then it is a *holocaust*. For there are some who as yet are retained in mind in this world, and who afford help to the poor from their possessions, and hasten to succour the oppressed. These in the good which they do, offer sacrifices, because of their actions they offer something to God, and keep something for themselves. And there are some who reserve nothing for themselves, but immolate senses, life, tongue, and the substance which they have received to Almighty God. What do these do but offer a holocaust, yea rather are made a holocaust?"

*To the poor:* Christ does not say, Give to your relations, or rich friends, as Remigius observes. For this is an act of natural love, by which you do not cast away your riches, but deliver them to those who belong to you, to be kept. Wherefore in this way you do not leave the world, but rather immerse yourself further in it. You must

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make an exception, when your relations according to their position are in need of your riches; for then, they are reckoned poor in their own station. But *give to the poor*, from whom you expect nothing in return, but from God only. Therefore this is a pure act of charity and poverty, and renunciation of wealth. Origen adds, he who gives his goods to the poor is assisted by their prayers.

*And thou shalt have treasure*, &c. By the word *treasure*, says Chrysostom, "the abundance and the permanence of the recompense are shown." And S. Hilary says, "By the casting away of earthly riches heavenly wealth is purchased." Beautifully does S. Augustine observe (*Serm*, 28, *de Verb. Apost.*), "Great is the happiness of Christians, to whom it is given, to make poverty the price of the kingdom of Heaven. Let not thy poverty displease thee. Nothing richer can be found than it is. Would you know how wealthy it is? It purchases Heaven. By what treasures could be conferred what we see granted to poverty? That a rich man should come to the kingdom of Heaven with his possessions may not be: but he may get there by despising them." Sell clay therefore, and buy Heaven: give a penny and procure a treasure.

*And come, follow Me:* Journeying in poverty, and preaching the kingdom of God. "For many," says S. Jerome, "even when they leave their riches do not follow the Lord. Neither does this suffice for perfection, unless after despising riches, they follow the Saviour; that is, leave evil and do good. For the world is more easily set at nought than the will. Therefore do the words follow, *Come and follow Me.* Again, *Follow Me* implies the union of an active with a contemplative life. There is a threefold sort of holy life. The first and lowest is the active life. The second is the contemplative. The third and most perfect is the union of action with contemplation, that what we derive from God by contemplation, we should afterwards teach to others. This was the life which Christ and His Apostles led. S. Ambrose gives the reason in his explanation of the title of the 39th Psalm. "Christ," he says, "is the end of all things, which with a pious mind, we ask for. For whether you seek for wisdom, or study virtue, or truth, or the way of justice, or the resurrection, in

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all things you must follow Christ, who is the Power and the Wisdom of God: who is Truth, the Way, Justice, Resurrection. After whom therefore do you strive, but the perfection of all things, and the sum of virtues? And therefore He saith to thee, *Come, follow Me*, i.e., that thou mayest deserve to arrive at the consummation of virtues. Therefore he who follows Christ ought to imitate Him as closely as he can; to meditate upon His precepts, and the Divine examples of His deeds."

Observe that in this chapter Christ gives three chief evangelical counsels, viz., of celibacy and continence, ver. 12: of poverty, when He says, *Sell that thou hast*, ver. 21: of obedience, when He says, *Follow Me*, i.e., obey Me and My command: imitate My obedience even unto death.

Ver. 22. *When the young man heard*, &c. Wisely says S. Augustine (*Epist.* 43. *ad Paulin.*), "I know not how it is that when superfluous earthly things are loved, the more acquired the more they bind. Wherefore did that young man depart in sorrow, except because he had great riches? For it is one thing to be unwilling to incorporate with yourself what you have not; it is another thing to tear away what has been incorporated. The former may be repudiated as something not belonging to you: divesting yourself of the latter is like cutting off your limbs." In the Gospel according to the Hebrews which Origen cites, there is here a considerable addition. It is as follows. "Another of the rich men said unto Him, Master, what good thing shall I do that I may live? He saith unto him, Man, keep the Law and the Prophets. He answered Him, I have done this. He said unto him, Go and sell all that thou possessest, and divide amongst the poor, and come, follow Me. But the rich man began to scratch his head, and it pleased him not. And the Lord said unto him, How sayest thou, I have kept the Law and the Prophets? For it is written in the Law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, and lo, many of thy brethren, the sons of Abraham, are clothed in filthy garments, and perish of hunger, and thy house is full of many good things, and there goeth not out of it anything whatsoever unto them. And He turned

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and said unto His disciple Simon, who was sitting by Him,—Simon, son of Jonah, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

Verse 24. *And again I say unto you*, &c. The Arabic is, *the entering of a camel into a needle's eye is more easy. And again*, the Gr. πάλιν δὲ, i.e., *but again*. Christ, in giving this addition, as it were corrects what he has just said: "I have said that it is a difficult thing for a rich man to be saved, now I add something more, that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter Heaven." By *rich man*, Remigius understands one who trusts in riches, who places all his hope in them, which is what many rich men do. More simply you may take it to mean any rich person.

You will ask, What is the meaning of *camel* in this passage, and how could it pass through a needle's eye? Some, with Theophylact, understand in Greek a sailor's cable, which is κάμηλος, a camel. Some, with the *Gloss*, understand a gate of Jerusalem; which, because it was very low, was called the camel, because it was necessary for him who entered through it to stoop down and bend like a camel.

But I say that the tall and hump-backed animal, which is commonly called a camel, is here meant. So the Syriac, Arabic, Origen, SS. Hilary, Jerome, Chrysostom, and others, *passim*. Whence note that it was a proverb among the Jews, when they wished to signify that a thing was impossible, to say, "A camel will more easily pass through a needle's eye, than such a thing will be." Whence the Talmudists use such a proverb even now, as Caninius testifies (*in nom. Hebr. N. Test.*). Similar proverbs, signifying that a thing is impossible, are the following: "More easily will a tortoise outstrip a hare." "A wolf might take a sheep to wife first." "A locust will bring forth an ox sooner." "A tortoise will vanquish an eagle." "The earth will take to itself wings." "Rivers will run uphill." "More easily might you hide an elephant under your arm." "You will fly without wings first." "A beetle will more readily

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make honey." "The sky will fall first." "The sea will more easily produce vines." "Words will be wanting to a woman sooner." "More easily may you feed on wind."

Moreover, there is an hyperbole here. That is called impossible which is exceedingly difficult. Whence, that a rich man should be saved, which Christ here says is impossible, in the verse preceding He said was difficult. As S. Jerome observes, "Not impossibility is declared, but infrequency is shown." So too Jansen, Maldonatus, and others. Thus, in the twelfth verse, He said, *He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.* It means, some cannot receive, *i.e.*, with difficulty receive the counsel of celibacy. And Jeremiah says (xiii. 23): "If the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots, so too may ye do good when ye have learnt evil." (*Vulg.*) And yet this might be done, though it would be difficult. So it is as impossible—that is to say, difficult—for a rich man to be saved, as it would be for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. And yet, speaking absolutely, such a thing could take place: if, for example, the camel were cut up into the minutest particles, each one of which was passed separately, though slowly and laboriously, through the needle's eye. Or if some needle were made great and thick, that it should be like a tower or a pyramid; for then its eye would be of sufficient size for a camel to pass through it whole. Lastly, Emanuel Sa, by *the eye of a needle*, understands what a needle has, or what a needle does, for it is possible to make with it by degrees an immense aperture.

Again, you may take *impossible* here in a strict sense. For that a rich man should be saved is impossible with men: but it is possible with God, as Christ says in verse 26. That is to say, it is impossible by natural strength, but by the power of the grace given by God it is possible. Just as that a camel should pass through the eye of a needle is possible by the power of God. That this is possible with God is plain from a similar case; namely from the quantity of the body of Christ, which in the Eucharist is wholly contained in a very small Host, yea in every particle of it. For if God is able to place the whole body of Christ in a particle of a

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consecrated Host, He is able also to make a camel pass through the eye of a needle.

Appositely and elegantly says Francis Lucas, *a rich man* puffed up and swelling with his riches, on whose back great burdens of wealth are pressing is compared to *a camel*, and *the strait gate*, by which we must enter into life to the *eye of a needle*, that you may understand that those who abound in riches, and are swelling with pride and disdain in too great a degree to allow themselves to be reduced within those narrow bounds in which God confines His own people are meant. I have given many analogies between *a camel* and *a rich man* in Ecclus. xiii. 11,

By this similitude of *a camel* and a *needle* Christ signifies that his riches are not so much an advantage to a rich man, as an impediment to virtue, and the kingdom of heaven. Wisely therefore did He counsel the young man that he should give his wealth to the poor, and as a poor man follow Christ who was poor.

*Mystically.* Isaiah prophesied that *camels, i.e.*, rich men, laying aside by the grace of Christ the hump of their pride, would enter into the Church through *the eye of a needle. i.e.*, through the straits of humility and the evangelical law (lx. 6). "The company of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Epha." Hear S. Jerome, "Such was thy mother Paula of saintly memory, and thy brother, Pammachias, who through the eye of a needle, that is by the strait and narrow way which leadeth unto life, passed, and with their burdens leaving the broad way, which leads to Tartarus, carried whatever they had as the Lord's gifts, according to the saying, "the ransom of a man are his riches," for the things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

*Allegorically*, S. Augustine (*lib.* 2, *quæst. cap.* 47), and S. Gregory (*lib.* 35, *Moral.* 17), by *camel* understood Christ and by *the needle*, His Passion. Thus, it is more easy that Christ should suffer for the lovers of the world, than for lovers of the world to be converted unto Christ. Hear S. Gregory, "A camel passed through the eye of a needle when our Redeemer entered through the straitness of His Passion, even unto the enduring of death. This Passion

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was like a needle, because it pricked His body with pain. But more easily could a camel pass through the eye of a needle than a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven, because unless He had first shown unto us by His Passion the pattern of humility, by no means would our proud rigidity have bowed down."

*Symbolically* and *Anagogically*, *Auctor Imperf.* (*apud. S. Chrysostom Hom.* 33) says, "The souls of the Gentiles are likened unto crooked *camels*, in which was the hump of idolatry, because the knowledge of God is the lifting up of the soul. But the *needle* is the Son of God, of which the first part is subtle according to the Divinity: but the rest is thicker according to the Incarnation. But the whole is straight, and hath no bending, through the wound of whose Passion the Gentiles entered into life. With this needle the garment of immortality hath been sewed. It is the very needle which has sewed the flesh to the spirit. This needle hath united the people of the Jews to the Gentiles. This needle hath brought about friendship between angels and men. It is easier then for the Gentiles to pass through the eye of the needle than for the rich Jews to enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

Ver. 25. *When the disciples heard*, &c. Because there were few, and at that time scarcely any, who did not wish to be rich. For all were gasping after lucre, even as many gasp after it now. For as S. Augustine says upon this passage, "All who desire riches are counted among the rich."

*But Jesus beheld.* Greek, ἐμβλέψας. Jesus looking upon his disciples, regarding them with a benign countenance, calmed the timidity and anxiety of their minds. So Chrysostom. *With men:* it is impossible to a rich man by human strength to obtain salvation, for he is entangled in his riches. And this salvation is a supernatural blessing, which we cannot obtain without similar supernatural powers of grace. But to God all things are possible, because God is the Author and the Fountain both of nature and grace and glory, and He so provides that by grace we should easily and gravely overcome all the difficulties and hindrances of nature: and, which pertains to the subject now in hand, He brings it about that rich men are not cor-

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rupted by their riches, but use them well, yea, that not a few, forsaking them, are ambitious of, and follow the evangelical poverty of Christ. Thus did all the first Christians, who had all things common. (Acts iv. 32.)

*Then answered Peter.* Arabic, *What then is nigh, that it may be to us? What?* namely, of reward in Heaven, and glory in life eternal? Peter following Christ's counsel of poverty, which the young man had despised, becoming more zealous, animates the Apostles, because they were almost alone in following the counsel of poverty given by Christ. And that he might still further encourage them, he asks what, and how great reward of glory awaits himself and the other Apostles, who followed Christ in His poverty in preaching the good news of the kingdom of Heaven? Thus Peter would confirm his companions in their holy purpose.

*We have left all.* Our ships and our nets, by which we gained our livelihood. And although these were poor and small things, yet, as S. Gregory says (*Hom.* 5, *in Evang.*), "he has forsaken much, who has left the desire of having. By those who followed Christ as many things were left as could be desired by those who followed him not." For the poor in spirit, although he may be reckoned among the needy, yet in a sense is he rich, because all the things which he might have, hope for, or obtain, all his life long in the world, yea, the whole world, he forsakes for the love of Christ, that he may give up his whole heart to God. This is an heroic act of poverty, and therefore of charity and religion in which a man offers himself as a whole burnt offering to God: yea he himself becomes a living and perpetual burnt offering.

Hear S. Augustine. (*In Psalm* 104, *Conc.* 3.) "Peter left not only what he had, but what he wished to have. For what poor person is there who is not puffed up by worldly hopes? Who does not daily desire to increase his possessions? That cupidity was cut off. Peter left the whole world, and Peter received the whole world. 'Having nothing, and yet possessing all things.'"

*Jesus said unto them,* &c. *In the regeneration,* i.e., in baptism. For this is spiritual regeneration, in which, dying unto sin, we are



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born into spiritual and heavenly life. Thus S. Hilary explains, "Ye who have followed Me through the regeneration of baptism, shall sit with Me as judges of the twelve tribes of Israel." But all other commentators, *passim*, understand by *regeneration*, the general resurrection in the Day of Judgment. For this shall be the renovation of the body, and of the whole man as well as of the universe, and, as it were, their second birth to glory. Hence it is rightly called here and elsewhere *Regeneration*. Whence the Syriac renders, *in the new world*: the Arabic, *in the generation to come*. For then there shall be a new heaven and a new earth. (*Isaiah* lxv. 17. *Apoc.* xxi. 1. 2 *Peter* iii. 13.)

*When the Son of Man shall sit*, &c. *In the seat of His majesty* (Vulg.); *of His glory* (Arabic). S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius understand by *session*, judicial power. For judges sit in order that they may adjudicate calmly and tranquilly, without perturbation or haste. This is true; but over and above this, *sitting* in this place signifies properly that Christ will sit in judgment, and with Him the Apostles and those like them, and that on thrones of cloud, splendid and majestic, but each according to his merit and dignity. Whence Sacred Scripture ordinarily attributes a *seat* and *sitting* to Christ in judgment. For sitting under such circumstances is common to all nations, and is the natural posture of judges. So Maldonatus. But Jansen and some others deny this, who say that the proper posture of the glorified body such as Christ has, is standing rather than sitting. But both postures are appropriate to the glorified body—viz., standing for fighting, and sitting for judgment.

*Ye shall sit*, &c. Richard Victor (*Tract. de potest. judiciar.*) and others think that these things were promised by Christ to the Apostles alone, because they were His first followers. As though He had said, "Each of you twelve shall have his throne in the judgment;" even Judas, says Chrysostom, if he persevere in his vocation. But others, with more probability, think that these promises were made also to the followers of the Apostles, such as religious, who leaving all things to preach the Gospel, come nearest

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to Christ and His Apostles. A definite number, then, is placed here for an indefinite one, viz., *twelve* for *all*. For Christ speaks to His twelve Apostles, but in such a manner as to address their followers. For they who have equal labour with Apostles, will deserve equal honour with them. Christ therefore promises these judicial seats to those who leave all things, and follow Him in preaching the Gospel. This is what religious do, especially such as devote themselves to win souls. Whence S. Bernard says (*Serm. de Ingratitud.*): We have all made profession of the Apostolic life. Hence Nazianzen (*Orat. in Julian.* 1) shows that it is the privilege of monks to sit on thrones. S. Augustine (*in Ps.* 87) proves this. "For if there were to be twelves thrones only, Paul, the thirteenth Apostle, would have no throne; and he would not be able to judge who said, nevertheless, that he should judge not men only, but even angels. Not only, then, those twelve, and the Apostle Paul, but as many as shall judge pertain to the twelve thrones, on account of the general signification." And S. Bernard says (*Serm. de S. Benedict.*): "Altogether just is the retribution that they who here for Christ's sake have forsaken the glory of human majesty, should there be glorified by Christ and sit with Him in an especial manner as judges. But let no one think that only the twelve Apostles (for instead of Judas, who transgressed Matthias was chosen) shall at that time be judges; for as neither are there twelve tribes only of Israel to be judged, for otherwise the tribe of Levi, which was the thirteenth, would be unjudged; and Paul—who was the thirteenth Apostle—would, perchance, be deprived of judging; whereas he says himself: 'Know ye not that we shall judge angels?' We must understand, therefore, that all who, after the example of the Apostles, have left all things and followed Christ, shall come as judges with Him, even as all men shall be judged: for because by the number twelve, in Scripture, totality is often understood; by the twelve thrones of the Apostles the entire number of all who judge, and by the twelve tribes of Israel the entire number of those who are to be judged is shown." S. Thomas demonstrates the same thing at length (*Tract. cont. retrahent. a Relig. caps.* 6 & 7), where he teaches that this *session* is pro-



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mised to evangelical poverty. And he proves from hence how sublime and pleasing to God this poverty is, forasmuch as it excels other virtues, and merits this lofty judicial power. S. Gregory gives the reason (*Moral.* 26, 20), when, interpreting that passage in Job. xxxvi.—*He hath given judgment for the poor*—he says: "The more they were despised in this world through their great humility, so much the more, when they receive their thrones, do they grow in the height of power."

Wherefore deservedly does S. Bernard, admiring this their excellency, exclaim (Serm. 8, in Ps. *Qui habitat*), "O grace of friendship, O summit of honour, O privilege of confidence, O prerogative of perfect security! For what is so much to be feared? What is so full of anxiety and vehement solicitude as the thought of standing to be judged at that awful tribunal, and to wait for the sentence as yet doubtful, from so strict a Judge?" And after a little, he says, "Happy indeed the position, which in that supreme clashing of the elements, in that tremendous examination of deserts, in that so great scrutiny of judging, can make them not secure only but glorious." Moreover this glorious judicial session before the whole world, yea of the whole world, is promised by Christ to all those, who leaving all things, follow by means of perfect imitation, Christ who was poor, as poor, and spread His Gospel, and His kingdom.

The expression therefore, *ye shall sit*, implies, 1. The security of those who are poor for the Gospel's sake. 2. The privilege of judging. 3. Dignity and eminence above others. 4. The nearest place to Christ and most perfect union with Him. 5. A principality of grace, happiness and glory, that inasmuch as they are princes of the kingdom of heaven, they should have the right of judging, and of admitting into it those who are worthy, and excluding the unworthy.

*Tropologically, Auctor Imperfecti*, by this session and judicial power understands that there is promised to those who leave all things and follow Christ a dominion of hearts, so that they may rule over the hearts and minds of men, and place in them the throne and kingdom of Christ where they may sit, and rule like kings, and make all things

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therein obedient to the law of Christ. Wherefore Apostles and Apostolic men, leaving all things, as monks and religious have done, being inflamed with the love of God, have converted the world, as Jerome Platus shows (*lib.* 2, *de bono stat. Relig. c.* 30). For says *Auctor Imperfecti*, "all who receive Christ into themselves by believing in and perfectly following Him, are the thrones of His majesty." And, "whosoever shall receive the word of Peter becomes the throne of Peter, and Peter sits in him."

*Judging the twelve tribes*, not only by comparison with the wicked, as SS. Jerome and Chrysostom, Euthymius, and *Auctor Imperfecti* explain, as the Queen of the South and the Ninevites are said to be about to condemn the Jews in the day of judgment, that is to say, by their example, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, whereas the Jews would not repent at the preaching of Christ. Nor yet even merely by approbation of the sentence of Christ in which manner all the saints shall judge: but much more honourably and gloriously, as it were nobles and princes of the heavenly kingdom, sitting upon their own thrones as assessors with Christ, as cardinals with the pope. They shall in truth judge, and pass the same sentence as Christ by which they shall assign the just to heaven, the unjust to hell, rebuking and reproving those who despised their doctrine and the example of their holy life, and praising those who cherished and honoured both.

*Twelve tribes of Israel:* understand not the twelve tribes of Israel only, as some expound, but likewise all nations.

Where observe, twelve tribes are spoken of, although the tribe of Joseph, being divided into two—Ephraim and Manasseh—whom Jacob adopted as his own sons, and made them equal in the rights of succession and inheritance with them (and according to this computation the tribe of Levi would not be the twelfth but the thirteenth); yet if we look at the origin of the tribes from the Patriarchs, the sons of Jacob, there were but twelve.

Observe 2. These twelve tribes were formerly the elect and faithful people of God, yea, the Church of God, even in the time of Christ. Yea this was the kingdom of Israel promised to Messiah. Whence

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the nations who believed in Christ were, as it were, grafted into this Church and people of the Jews, and as it were endowed with its rights of citizenship, so that they were no longer Gentiles but *Jews* that is, *confessing and believing*, and *Israelites, i.e.*, having *power with God*, as the Apostle teaches (Romans ii. 29). Hence too S. John (Apoc. xxi. 13.), says that he saw the names of the twelve tribes of Israel inscribed on the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. All Christians, therefore, of all nations are divided and distributed among the twelve tribes of Israel, in such manner that some are reckoned to belong to the tribe of Judah, others to the tribe of Joseph, others to the tribe of Levi, and so on, according to the diversity of their virtues and professions. To Judah pertain magistrates, kings and princes. To Joseph pertain virgins, the chaste and celibates. For such a one was Joseph before his elevation. To Levi, pertain priests and deacons, and religious.

Note 3. Unbelieving nations do not properly pertain to the twelve tribes of Israel, who are the faithful. Wherefore by this omission of the unbelievers it is tacitly intimated that they will not be judged in the Day of Judgment; "for he that believeth not is judged already" (John iii. 18). This must be understood of the judgment of a doubtful issue, for in this way only will believers be judged. For of them there can be doubt whether they will be saved or damned, which doubt will be resolved by an examination of the works of each. For in another view, the unbelieving also will appear and be judged in the Day of Judgment, and be awarded greater or less punishment in hell, according to their demerits. This is allowed by all, and is plain from Joel iii. 2, and Matthew xxv. 32.

Verse 29—*And every one that hath forsaken houses*, &c. Observe that in the several clauses of this sentence the disjunctive conjunction, *or*, is put because Christ is not speaking now of those who have left *everything* to follow Him, but of those who have only left *some things* for His sake and the Gospel's. So Origen, S. Jerome, Maldonatus. S. Chrysostom is of a different opinion, and thinks that the same thing is here promised by Christ to all the faithful

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which a little previously He had promised to the twelve Apostles. As though He had said, All the faithful who have acted in the same way as the twelve Apostles, by forsaking all things and following Me, shall receive the same honour with them, and shall obtain one of the twelve thrones among the Apostles, and on it shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel. But the previous explanation is the best, as being required by the disjunctive conjunction, *or*.

*Who hath left house:* either because he has been despoiled of his house, and been driven into exile by a tyrant; or because he has voluntarily given up his house on account of the scandals and temptations which he hath found in it; or because he hath left his house and fled to a monastery, or church, in order to give himself up entirely to the service of God. I say the same thing concerning brethren, sisters, father, mother, wife, children; for when they are unbelieving and wicked, they make it their business to draw a believer away from faith and righteousness. Wherefore, if a wife draw away her husband from faith and piety, Christ advises the husband to be divorced from her; for it is better to desert a wife than to desert Christ. But voluntarily they leave the same who from zeal for the more perfect life, flee to the cloisters. This is the meaning of *for My Name's sake; i.e.*, for the sake of Me and My love and reverence, that they may better and more fully serve Me.

*Shall receive* (Gr. ἑκατονταπλασίονα) *a hundredfold*—viz., of each; that instead of one house which he has left for the sake of Christ he should receive a hundred, for one brother a hundred brethren, and so on. The Syriac is, *one in to a hundred, i.e.*, augmented a hundred per cent. Thus also the Egyptian, Arabic, Ethiopic and Persian, which generally agree among themselves, especially the Ethiopic with the Persian, and the Egyptian with the Arabic. A *hundredfold* here means *many times more*, as Luke as it. A definite number is put for an indefinite, in order that the vast magnitude of the compensation may be signified.

You will ask, what sort of a recompense is this which is promised to those who have left their possessions for Christ? 1. The Chiliasts or Millenarians by *a hundredfold* understand a thousand years, with

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which these saints after the General (*communis*) Resurrection* shall be delighted in this world, and shall enjoy all sorts of pleasures. But this is an error which I have confuted in Apoc. xx. And what Mark says is repugnant to this (x. 30), *Receive a hundred times as much now in this present time.* Hear S. Jerome, "By reason of this sentence, some introduce a thousand years after the Resurrection, and say, then there shall be restored to us a hundred times as many of all the things which we have forsaken; and also eternal life. They do not perceive if in other things the recompense were becoming, it would be something shameful in the matter of wives, that he who had forsaken one wife for the Lord's sake, should receive a hundred wives in the time to come."

2. S. Gregory (*Hom.* 18 *in Ezech.*) says, "He shall receive *a hundredfold*, because God shall take care, that such a one shall rejoice far more in his poverty, or his renunciation of his goods for the love of Christ, than rich men rejoice in all their riches and advantages." And this, these who give up their possessions for Christ's sake do in very deed experience.

3. S. Jerome, Bede, and others, take *a hundredfold* to apply not to temporal, but to spiritual goods, such as peace, joy, Divine consolations, and all other gifts and graces, with which God comforts them, and which He heaps upon them. These things surpass all earthly goods and joys, far more than a hundred exceeds unity. But because Mark particularly explains *a hundred times as many*, by adding, *houses, brethren, sisters, mothers, children, and lands.* Hence,

4. And more correctly, Origen, Theophylact, Euthymius, and Cassian explain *the hundredfold* thus, that the man who forsakes his possessions and friends for Christ's sake, shall find that Christ will take care that he has a hundred, *i.e.*, very many others, who will give him the love and help of brothers, wives and mothers, with far more exceeding sweetness and charity; so that it shall not seem that he has

* If by *communis* à Lapide means, as I suppose he does, the General Resurrection, he is certainly mistaken in attributing this opinion to the Chiliasts, or Millenarians.

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lost his own possessions, but has only laid them down, and in Christ's providence has multiplied them with great usury. For spiritual affections are sweeter than natural ones. Wherefore he who has left one home for Christ will find a hundred and more homes of pious people open and ready to receive him with love and gladness. Priests and those who flee from their homes on account of the persecution in Japan, England and Scotland know this by experience. They find the houses of all the faithful open to receive them to hospitality, and are frequently migrating from house to house. So too a religious, who has left one house of his father for Christ finds a hundred, not houses, but colleges and monasteries, very great and fair to receive him with maternal tenderness. So also he who has left one field for Christ will find a hundred fields of the worshippers of Christ by which he may be nourished, and that without labour, or toil, whereas he would have had to cultivate his own. In like manner for one brother forsaken, there will be very many Christians who will cherish him with fraternal love, and cleave to him more sweetly with spiritual attachment. For one sister, very many maidens will chastely love him, and attend to his wants like a brother. Instead of one father, very many elders will cherish him as a son. For one mother, very many matrons will supply his necessities with maternal care. For one wife, a hundred wives of others, united to him in chaste spiritual bonds will be ready by means of themselves and others to care for him in sickness, and attend to his wants just as lovingly as though they were his own wives. Lastly, instead of a single son or a daughter, innumerable children will revere him as a father, and hang upon his sound doctrine and counsels, from whom his mind will derive greater pleasure than he could from his own children. This is what S. Augustine says from Solomon (*epist.* 89, *quæst.* 4): "The whole world is the riches of the faithful." Cassian teaches the same thing (*Collat. ult. cap.* vii.). The Apostles had experience of this *hundredfold*, and so had the early Christians, in the fervour of the Primitive Church, concerning whom Paul says, "having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Also Luke, Acts iv. 32. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one

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heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." And by and by, "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold. And laid them down at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made to every man according as he had need." This is experienced even now by good religious. And even if at any time it falls out otherwise, and they are in want of anything for the body, then God supplies the corporeal deficiency, and compensates for it by abundance of spiritual gifts and joys.

There was a famous example of this in the philosopher Peregrinus, who pretended to be a Christian, and as such in a time of persecucution offered himself to be put in prison, that he might enjoy the assistance and the money of Christians who succoured him. Nor was he mistaken in his opinion. For the Christians vied with one another in helping him, and the impostor went back to his own country laden with gold, as Lucian relates, *in Peregrino*.

Lastly, S. Ambrose (*in Ps.* cxix. *lit. Cheth.*), by *a hundredfold*, understands God Himself, and consequently the whole world, which is God's property. For to such as leave all things for God's sake, God is father, mother, wife, brother, sister, and all things. "Because," says S. Ambrose, "he who has left all things begins to possess God, and He is, as it were, the perfect reward of virtues, which is reckoned not by the enumeration of *a hundredfold*, but by the estimation of perfect virtue." He adduces the example of the tribe of Levi, which—because, by the Lord's command, it had no portion of the land among the other tribes—the Lord Himself promised, and constantly confirmed it, that He would be its portion and inheritance. Whence he concludes with this golden sentence: "He who has God for his portion is the possessor of all nature. Instead of lands, he is sufficient to himself, having good fruit, which cannot perish. Instead of houses, it is enough for him that there is the habitation of God, and the temple of God, than which nothing can be more precious. For what is more precious than God? That is

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the portion which no earthly inheritance can equal. What is more magnificent than the celestial host? What more blessed than Divine possession?" And Cassian says: "Instead of that joy which any one had in the possession of a single field or house, he shall enjoy a hundredfold more the delight of riches, who passing into the adoption of the sons of God, shall possess as his own all things which belong to the Eternal Father, and in effect and virtue (following the example of His True Son) shall proclaim, 'All things that the Father hath are Mine;' and now no more with any penal care of distraction or anxiety, but secure and joyful he cometh, as it were, everywhere to his own, hearing daily what the Apostle preaches—'All things are yours, whether things present, or things to come.'" This, therefore, is the congruous and condign reward of poverty—that having nothing, nothing should be wanting to it, but that it should possess all things. S. Francis experienced this, and exhorted his brethren to it. "Dearest sons," he said, "great and unspeakable are the kindnesses of our God toward us, who thus turns the hearts of the faithful towards us His humble and worthless servants. From what we have received we daily hope for what we are to receive. Cast, therefore, your care upon the Lord, and He will nourish you on this mountain (*Alvernia*), Who sustained Elias in the wilderness, Antony and Paul in the desert. Know this of a surety, that there is no more secure refuge for the relief of our necessities than to have nothing. For if we be truly and evangelically poor, the world will have compassion upon us, and feed us abundantly. But if we are false to poverty, the world will forsake us; and if we ward off indigence by unlawful means, we shall endure worse penury." (So Wadding, *in Annal. Minorum*, A.C. 1212, *num.* 14.) Mark adds, that this *hundredfold* will be given *with persecutions* (x. 30). How this is I have there explained.

*Tropologically*. Cassian, in the place already cited, asserts that the joy of the converted in virtue is a hundred times as great as it was before in cupidity and vice; and he says, "If instead of the perturbation of anger and fury, you weigh the perpetual calmness of the mind; for the torment of anxiety and distraction, the quiet of security;

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for the fruitless and penal sadness of this world, the fruit of sorrow unto salvation; for the vanity of worldly joy, the richness of spiritual delight; you will perceive that the recompense of such an exchange is *a hundredfold.*"

*Anagogically*, S. Anthony, as S. Athanasius testifies in his *Life*, understands by *hundredfold* the kingdom of Heaven, in which there are a hundred times more good things than there are on earth. "He who hath left," he said, "the dominion of the whole world shall receive a hundredfold better rewards in the kingdom above." Instead of transitory things, those which are steadfast shall be given him; for worthless, things excellent; great things instead of small; heavenly for earthly; divine for human; things eternal for those of a moment.

*And shall inherit*, &c. Syriac, *shall possess in inheritance.* Arabic, *shall become the heir of eternal life.* This is the most ample inheritance, in which the blessed are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Therefore they shall possess not only earth and Heaven, and all things which in them are, but even God Himself; and every honour, all riches, all glory, all sweetness, all delights, all joys, and in short, all good things in God; and that, not as having the mere usufruct, but as heirs and masters, with perpetual inheritance, to endure for ever, so long as God shall be God. All this is involved and signified in the expression, *eternal life.* Moreover all who keep the commandments of God shall inherit this *eternal life*, as Christ hath said, ver. 17. They however shall possess it in a more full and glorious degree, who have united counsels to precepts. Whence in this place Christ promises and assigns it to such only. By this manner of speaking He tacitly intimates that it is a difficult thing to attain *eternal life* by the observance of precepts only, without keeping the counsels. For the one is hard without the other. It is difficult to keep all the commands of God, unless the counsels, especially that of poverty, be observed. For, as Christ says (ver. 23), it is difficult, and as it were impossible for a rich man to be saved.

Verse 30. *But many that are first*, &c. Observe how appositely Christ subjoins these words to what He had previously said. For He Himself

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has through almost the whole of this chapter, opposed Himself and His grace and the counsels of the Gospels, to the Pharisees and the Old Law. Whence He here, by consequence, opposes its reward to His reward, as will be plain in the next chapter. But He has especial reference to what He had spoken immediately before concerning the *twelve judicial thrones;* concerning the *hundredfold;* concerning the *life eternal.* And He appears to answer a tacit objection of the Apostles. For they might have said within themselves, "How shall this be, that we who are vile, poor, ignorant, ignoble, should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, when there are in them very many men eminent in dignity, wealth, learning, fame, authority, such as the Scribes and Pharisees, and that young ruler, who was also a keeper of the Law?" Christ meets this objection, and declares that they indeed are eminent, and the first in this world, but that in Heaven and the *life eternal they will be the last.* That is, they would find no place there, they will be rejected and excluded from it. He used a like mode of expression (v. 19), "Whoso shall break one of these least commandments, shall be called the least, *i.e.*, not at all in the kingdom of Heaven." And *the last* are called here the most remote from the kingdom of Heaven, as is plain from Luc. xiii. 30. This was because they despised Christ as being a poor man. But the Apostles, and others like them, who left all to follow Christ, who seemed in this world the poorest and the least of men, were to be *the first* in the *life eternal,* forasmuch as they were most dear to Christ, the King of Heaven, and most like Him in life and character, especially in poverty and zeal in preaching. So S. Jerome, Bede, S. Thomas, and others; also Victor Antioch (*in cap. x. Marci.*). Now He saith *many* not *all,* because there are some first here, who shall be first also in Heaven, such as holy kings, princes, doctors, bishops, pontiffs, who although they abound in wealth, yet are poor in spirit. And in turn there are some who are last here who shall be also last in Heaven, such as paupers and beggars, who give themselves up to theft and rapine in order to supply their wants, and that they may become rich and opulent.

On the whole, by this saying Christ signifies that the rich, and

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those who pant after earthly good, shall be shut out of Heaven; but the poor who covet heavenly things shall be the first *there*. He refers to what He said to the rich young man (ver. 21): *If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven.* Also to Peter's words: *Lo, we have left all and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?* Thus Christ in Heaven is the *first*, Who on earth was the *last*, according to the words in Isaiah liii.: "We saw Him, and there was no comeliness; we desired Him, Who was despised and the last of men." (*Vulg.*) See what is there said. Next to Christ is the Blessed Virgin, who, after Christ, was the last among men. The Apostles follow, of whom Paul spake (1 Cor. iv. 9, 13): "For I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. . . . Being defamed, we intreat; we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." Thus concerning S. Martin the Church sings: "Martin is received with joy into Abraham's bosom. Martin, the poor and lowly, enters Heaven rich. He is honoured with celestial hymns." There was seen in Heaven by a certain holy man a lofty and glorious throne, and as he was wondering for whom it was designed, he heard the words, "This seat is kept for the lowly Francis."

Lastly, many Fathers and scholastic Doctors—whom I will cite on the first verse of the following chapter—take the words *first* and *last* as applying strictly and literally to *eternal* life. In this manner: Rich men who here below have led an honest but comfortable life, keeping only the precepts of God, in Heaven shall be the last; but the poor men, who to the precepts have added evangelical counsels, and in poverty have followed Christ in preaching the Gospel, shall be the first in Heaven. I have said more about this in the following chapter. The meaning will be more ample with a more complete application to all that is said in the parable which follows, if you take *last* in both ways—viz., as signifying those who are to be excluded from Heaven, as well as those who are last in Heaven. For the Apostles, who as *first* shall judge the twelve

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tribes of Israel, as it were the last, shall award to many of them, as being just, the kingdom of Heaven, and to many as being unjust, hell. Moreover this sentence, *many that are first shall be last, and the last first*, Christ explains by the subsequent parable of the labourers. This sentence is, as it were, the *pro-parable, i.e.*, the title and argument of that parable, to which is annexed the *post-parable*, as it were the scope and application of the parable (xx. 16). *Thus the last shall be first, and the first last; for many are called, but few chosen.* Whence it is plain that the *post-parable* exactly corresponds to the *pro-parable*, indeed that it is one and the same thing with it. The *first* therefore are called the *chosen*, or the *elect:* but the *called* only, not the *elect*, are called the *last.*

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## CHAPTER XX.

1 *Christ by the similitude of the labourers in the vineyard, sheweth that God is debtor unto no man:* 17 *foretelleth his passion:* 20 *by answering the mother of Zebedee's children teacheth his disciples to be lowly:* 30 *and giveth two blind men their sight.*

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market place.

4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, *that* shall ye receive.

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

11 And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

12 Saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

14 Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

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16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

17 ¶ And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *him:* and the third day he shall rise again.

20 ¶ Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

24 And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

25 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

30 ¶ And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

34 So Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

*The kingdom of Heaven is like.* That is, God acts in the kingdom of Heaven like a master hiring labourers into his vineyard; for strictly speaking, the kingdom of Heaven is not like the householder himself, but like his house and family.

Christ's purpose is by means of this parable to prove the truth of



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His last saying in the preceding chapter, *many that are first shall be last*, &c., and to shew that by the grace of God, without any injustice or injury to anyone it will come to pass that those who here seemed to have the first place will in the Day of Judgment have the last, and those who seemed to have the last will then have the first; that is, that the Apostles and the despised faithful who followed Christ will in the kingdom of Heaven be preferred to the Scribes and Pharisees; and the believing Gentiles to the Jews, who were called by the Lord that they might obtain the first place in the kingdom of God, that is, in the Church both militant and triumphant; or, that the Sons of the New Testament, and especially the Apostles who are to sit on twelve thrones in the Day of Judgment, will be preferred to the Sons of the Old Testament, who under the shadows of legal sacrifices performed a laborious service, because, trusting to the works of the Law, they falsely claimed the kingdom of God for themselves, and rejected Christ. Whence they deservedly lost the kingdom; while the others submitted with humility to Christ, and zealously co-operated with Him, and therefore were elected in preference to the Jews both to grace and glory. That this is the scope of the parable is evident. 1. From the saying which precedes and follows it, *many that are first*, &c. 2. From S. Luke, who in chap. xiii., 29, 30, explains these same words of the admission of the Gentiles and the exclusion of the Jews. 3. Because otherwise we cannot explain the murmuring of those who were first called, for in Heaven among the blessed there is no murmuring, but only in hell among the damned.

By the vineyard we are to understand the Church; by the market place the world; by those called at the first, third, and sixth hour, the Jews, called in their fathers, Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, to the faith and worship of God; by those called at the eleventh hour, we are to understand the Gentiles; by the evening, the Day of Judgment, in which each will receive his reward, either already given in this life (as it was given to the Jews), or to be then given, as in the case of the Gentiles in Heaven.

By the penny (denarius) is signified a whole day's pay. The

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denarius was a common coin, of which there were many different kinds; for there was the copper, the silver, and the gold denarius. And it is clear that the pay given to the labourers was unequal, because the last were preferred to the others who came at the first, third, and sixth hour, for although the latter had laboured for a longer time, yet the former had laboured with greater grace, diligence and zeal.

You will say then, that to the greater *labourer* the less reward is given. I answer: True, but not to the greater *merit;* for to this a greater reward is always due, and is always given. Moreover, it is not the greater labourer that makes the merit greater, but grace, and co-operation with grace. The Apostles had greater grace than the Scribes, Christians than Jews, and co-operated more with grace, and therefore the greater denarius, *i.e.*, the greater reward was promised them. For to the Jews the denarius promised by God was a temporal reward, an abundance of temporal blessings; but to the Gentile Christians was promised by Christ a denarius far more noble, namely eternal life. The Jews therefore received a denarius of copper or silver, the Christians one of gold. For otherwise if the denarius signified exactly the same reward, it would not agree with the words which precede and follow the parable—*the first shall be last, and the last first.*

In a word, the parable signifies that the Gentiles who believe in Christ will be preferred to the Jews who despise Christ. And this is what S. Paul teaches in many places, and especially in his Epistle to the Romans. And Christ Himself says, *The publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.* (See also *S. Matt.* viii., 11, 12, and *S. Luke* xiii., 28, 30.)

According to this sense, the *first* will be saved, the *last* will be damned. But in another sense, the first who will be the last are those who were first called but arrive at their reward last; while the last who will be the first are those who though called last become the first in reward. Whence the Fathers, doctors, and schoolmen commonly explain this parable as if Christ intended to say that the first as well as the last, *i.e.*, Jews as well as Christians, who serve



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God, will receive the same eternal life; nor will it be to the injury of anyone that he has been called at the end of the world or of his own life; yea, rather he will be preferred in heavenly glory before others who were called long before, if with greater labour and zeal he co-operated with the greater grace given him by God. This is the interpretation of S. Jerome, S. Augustine, S. Chrysostom, S. Thomas, Maldonatus, Gregorius de Valentia, Bellarmine (*Lib.* iii. *de Justificatione, cap.* 16), and Suarez. And this interpretation is very probable, and it is much in its favour, that it is better explained in this way how the same denarius is given to all the labourers. For the Fathers everywhere by the denarius understand eternal life.

You will say, how is it that in this denarius the first and the last are equal, since the first excel the last in the felicity and glory of eternal life? I answer, that the same denarius denotes the same blessing generically and objectively, *i.e.*, the same Divine essence which constitutes the blessedness of the saints; for this is one and the same, but nevertheless the fruition of it is different according to their different degrees of merit; for those who have served God with greater grace and labour, as those did who were called last, will behold God in a clearer and more perfect vision, and therefore will have a fuller fruition of His love, and will be more blessed than those who served God with less grace and labour. So S. Gregory, S. Augustine, S. Jerome, S. Thomas (*Part I., quæst.* 15, *art.* 6), and others explain it. To these may be added Bellarmine in the place already quoted, *for that denarius*, he says, *signifies an equality of eternity, not of glory.* Again, this opinion is favoured by the words of Christ (chap. xix. 21, and following), which are closely connected with this parable. And now to explain the several points of the parable according to this sense: By the day is to be understood the course of this world; by the various hours the different ages of the world; so that the first hour is the age from Adam to Noah, the second that from Noah to Abraham, the third from Abraham to Moses, the sixth from Moses to Christ, the eleventh from Christ to the end of the world. Thus S. Hilary, S. Gregory, and Theophylact explain it. Or the day is the life of each man; the first hour being

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infancy; the third, youth; the sixth, manhood; the ninth, old age; the eleventh, decrepitude. So S. Jerome and S. Basil explain it. By the murmuring, understand with Theophylact, Suarez, and others, the surprise of the saints when those who shall be less in glory, and yet (as the Jews) had laboured more here will wonder that others, who laboured less here, but excelled them in the measure of grace, are preferred to them in glory. To conclude: the sense will be complete and adequate, if this second meaning is taken in conjunction with the first; for as I said at the end of the preceding chapter, *the last* can be taken in both ways—either as meaning the last, in the sense of the damned, or the last in Heaven itself, and therefore saved. The first sense applies to those who were first called, and clearly explains their murmuring; while the second sense applies to those last called, and in their case clearly explains the denarius, how the same denarius—*i.e.*, eternal life—is given to all. Wherefore, the second sense supplies the first, and the first supplies what is wanting in the second.

*Tropologically.* The vineyard is the soul which each man has to cultivate. Morally, therefore, we learn that we are called to labour in the vineyard, *i.e.*, our own souls and the Church of God. The cultivators of this vineyard are not held in honour for the time during which they have laboured, but for the diligence, the zeal, and the spirit with which they have laboured. S. Jerome (*Epist.* 13, *ad Paul*): Hence the Spouse in the Canticles says, They have made me keeper of the vineyards, mine own vineyard have I not kept. The essence of the soul is the vineyard, planted in the soil of the body; its faculties are the vines, and works of charity are its wine; the vines are to be fastened to the Cross, at the foot of which we make a grave, against the approach of our death and burial. This vineyard must be kept from the wild boar out of the wood (Ps. lxxx.) —*i.e.*, from lustful pleasure; and from the singular wild beast (*Vulg.*) —*i.e.*, from the sin of pride, which makes a man singular; from the fox of cunning flattery; from the wolf of greediness; from the dog of detraction. We must pray the Lord to send upon this His vineyard the rain of His doctrine, and the warmth of His charity, and

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dung—*i.e.*, the memory of the death of His Son and of the holy martyrs. The soul is green like a vineyard with flowers and leaves, that is, with holy desires and edifying speech; it pours forth the tears of compunction; it sheds forth the sweet odour of virtue; it bears the ripe grapes of good works. Again, the faithful man performs in his own soul the same works as the vine-dresser in the vineyard. He prunes, hoes, transplants, disentangles, &c.; the faithful does the same mystically in his own soul.

And now to explain each verse briefly. Verse 2. *When he had agreed with the labourers.* Jovian and Calvin have asserted that all the just are equal in reward, *i.e.*, in the denarius of eternal life, and that therefore they are equal in merit, and all good works are equal. But I have already answered that all are equal generally in eternal life; but in this there will be degrees, for some will have a clearer and others a dimmer vision of God, and therefore the one will be more and the others less blessed and glorious.

*And he went out about the third hour.* The Romans and the Jews used to divide the night as well as the day into twelve hours reckoned in four periods which in the night were called watches. The first hour began at sunrise, the sixth at midday. Again, in winter the hours were shorter in the day and longer in the night, and the reverse in summer.

*And He said unto them, go ye also.* To these He does not promise a denarius, but *what is right* (*just*, Vulg.) By this is signified the merit of good works, which according to justice merits a reward, which God promises to each work according to distributive justice.

*Again He went out.* This shews the carefulness of God who is desirous that all men should be workers in the vineyard of their own souls, and of the Church, that both may be adorned with fruits of every kind.

*About the eleventh hour.* This is the last hour of the day, and those called at this hour are Christians. Origen says that Adam was called at the first hour, Paul at the eleventh.

*Because no man hath hired us.* This is the vain excuse, S. Chrysostom says, of slothful men; for God calls all to virtue from childhood.

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But again S. Chrysostom says the hiring is the promise of eternal life: but the Gentiles knew neither God nor the promises of God, so they say that they had not been hired, or called, though they had been called by the law and light of nature.

*And when the evening was come.* The evening is the end of the world and the Day of Judgment.

*Symbolically*, Origen understands by the steward the holy Angels, as S. Michael; but Remigius understands Christ, Who as man is the steward of God the Father, and in His name will judge the quick and dead. Irenæus (*Lib.* iv. *contr. hær. c.* 70) understands the Holy Spirit who dispenses both gifts and graces, and glory and rewards.

The Gentiles had more grace, and co-operated with grace more than the Jews who were first called, and therefore they obtain a higher place in Heaven. We may learn from this that a man may easily gain an increase of merit and glory if he practise frequent acts of charity, and perform all external works from charity and the love of God; for thus he will merit more even than the religious who undergo hard penances, if he practise his works with greater charity than they do, although they be less difficult,

*Beginning with the last.* S. Gregory says, Those who are called at the end of life are often times rewarded before others, inasmuch as they depart out of the body into the kingdom before those who were called in childhood.

*When they came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.* This penny (denarius) was, as I have said above, in kind the same, but in appearance different. The meaning is that the Apostles and Christians called in the last age of the world have received a better denarius, and one that corresponds (*congruentem*) and is due to their labour and merit.

You will say that the first called, murmured and said, *Thou hast made them equal to us*, and therefore the same denarius was given to both; for if it had been a better one, they would have said, *Thou hast made them superior to us*, and they would have murmured much more.

I answer, that the day's hire is given to workmen in the

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evening, and therefore those who come last could not easily perceive what sort of denarius was given to those who preceded them, but they only heard the steward say to each, receive your denarius: or if they did see it, they could not clearly perceive in the darkness that they had received a copper denarius, while the others had received a gold one. For copper (aurichalcum) resembles gold in glow and brightness, so that they thought the same denarius was given to them as themselves, and were offended. All this parabolically signifies the envy of the Jews against the Gentiles, for they were offended because the Gentiles were made equal to them in the grace and glory of their Messiah: for they thought that these things were due properly and entirely to them alone, but to the Gentiles only by a certain gratuitous dispensation. Whence arose that contention of the Jews against S. Peter for preaching the Gospel to Cornelius; and that more vehement contention against S. Paul, as is clear from the Acts of the Apostles.

If you ask why Christ did not say expressly that those who came at the eleventh hour received a greater denarius, I answer that Christ was not here treating of that point, but He only intended to eradicate from the Jews their prejudice, and arrogant claim to the first place in the kingdom of Heaven. In opposition to this therefore He teaches that the first shall be last and the last first. For He wishes to confirm His promise made to the Apostles (S. Matt. xix. 28). For thus the Apostles will be first in Heaven, inasmuch as they will be the judges of the rest, but the Jews will be the last, as they are to be judged by them.

*Morally*, S. Chrysostom says, they are called at the eleventh hour who are called in old age; so that this parable was spoken to quicken the zeal of those who are converted in extreme old age, so that they may not suppose that they shall have any less than others.

*They murmured.* By the murmuring, S. Chrysostom says, is signified the greatness of the reward and glory, which in the Apostles is so great that the rest of the elect and blessed from among the Jews would envy them and would murmur, if envy and murmuring were possible among the blessed. In a different way, S. Gregory

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says, Because the Fathers before Christ were not brought to the kingdom; this is to have murmured. Lastly, S. Chrysostom thinks that this murmuring is only an ornament of (a point introduced into) the parable, and therefore not to be applied to the thing signified by it.

*We have borne the burden and heat of the day.* That is, we have toiled under the burden of the Law. The Scribes and Pharisees used to fast twice in the week, give tithes of all things to God, teach the people, compass sea and land to make one proselyte; so that they had a weight of labours, but often an unprofitable one.

Verse 13. *But He answered,* &c. An evil eye is an envious eye. The sense is, Since I have bestowed a favour of grace on those who came at the eleventh hour by giving them a denarius, I have done thee no wrong. The Master might have made answer to the murmurer, Those who came at the eleventh hour worked with greater grace and zeal, and accomplished more in one hour than thou didst in the whole day, and therefore merited more, as the first have received a better denarius. But it did not become the Master to contend on an equality with His servant, but rather to silence his murmuring by asserting his own right of ownership, liberality, and grace.

You will object, that S. Prosper here seems to take away all merit; for (*lib.* 2, *de Vocat. Gent. c.* 5) speaking of this parable, he says: "We read that the same reward was given to all the labourers, in order that those who laboured much without receiving more than the last might understand that they had received a gift of grace, not a reward of work." Bellarmine answers: "S. Prosper considers eternal life is the reward which is the same and equal in the case of all the blessed: and God bestows this eternal life as a gift of grace, not a reward of works, in that sense of which S. Augustine speaks, 'God crowns His own gifts, not thy merits;' and therefore He willed to bestow eternal life on those who had laboured much and on those who had laboured little; that those who labour much may not glory in their own strength."

*Take that thine is.* Take, O Pharisee, thy wealth and honours which I have given thee in this life, and which thou didst desire more

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than eternal life; be content with them, and go thy way. But Remigius explains the words thus: "Take thy reward, and enter into glory."

*I will give unto this last* (*i.e.*, the Gentiles), according to his merit, *even as unto thee.* But Origen says: "Perhaps He says to Adam, Friend, I do thee no wrong, &c." One may reasonably suppose that *this last* is the Apostle Paul, who laboured one hour. Others interpret: "Take thy damnation due to thee on account of thy murmuring, and go thy way to hell."

*So the last shall be first.* According to the first sense of the parable, the last who will be the first in Heaven are the elect; but the first who will be the last are the called only, who have not followed their calling or who have abandoned it, and are therefore damned. These are many, if they are compared with the elect, who are few (S. Matthew vii. 14). But according to the second sense, which I have given above, it is not easy to connect the latter clause, "Many are called, &c.," with the first, "so the last shall be first." Maldonatus thus connects them: "From the particular sentence in which He said that the first should be last and the last first, He draws a more general conclusion—that not all who are called will receive a reward, because very many when called will not come." Suarez considers that it is an argument *a fortiori*—You will not be astonished that the first will be last and the last first, since many are called but few chosen, and therefore all the rest will be damned, which is more to be wondered at and dreaded; for if many are called who are not saved, what wonder is it that many are called who are not first in reward, although they may obtain something?

Again many, *i.e.*, all are called to eternal life, yet He says many, because all are many and because He opposes them to the few who are elect: "live therefore like the few," says Cassian, "that with the few you may merit election and a place in Heaven."

Lastly, some explain thus, many, *i.e.*, all are called to grace and to the keeping of the commandments, but few are chosen to extraordinary grace, and to the keeping of the Evangelical counsels.

Of this opinion are those schoolmen who hold that there are two

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classes of the elect. 1. The ordinary class consisting of those who upon the pre-knowledge of their merits are elected to glory; the other, consisting of those who are elected to glory before their merits are pre-known, whom they call extraordinarily predestinated and suppose to be here intended, when it is said, "few are chosen." Among these few are the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles, and a few others; but the former are far more numerous, and therefore of them it is, many are called.

The Arabic version renders *How many are called*, &c., as if the words were an exclamation of Christ moved with wonder and pity at the multitude of the called and the fewness of the elect, and consequently at the multitude of the damned.

Here is brought to conclusion the narration of the events of the third year of Christ's ministry; for a short time after this He raised Lazarus, which event took place in March, after which in the same month and year He was crucified.

Verse 17. *And Jesus going up*, &c. This was the last journey of Christ to Jerusalem. From S. John xi. 54., &c., it is clear that after raising Lazarus He had departed to the city of Ephraim, to escape the hatred of the Pharisees, and now from that city on the approach of that Passover, when He was put to death by the Jews, He went up to Jerusalem according to the law. And truly He went up that He might accept, and, as it were, eagerly seize the cross and death appointed for Him in Jerusalem, and prepared by the decree of the Father for the redemption of the world.

Verse 18. *We go up.* That is, because Jerusalem, and especially the temple were on Mount Sion. Again, *we go up*, in order to submit to the Cross, according to that saying, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, &c." Again He says "*we go up*" to mark this stedfast purpose, as S. Chrysostom paraphrases, "Ye see how I go of My free will to death; when then ye shall see Me hung upon the Cross, think not that I am no more than man: for though to be able to die is human, yet to be willing to die is more than human."

Lastly, *we go up*, as if to our triumph on the citadel of Jerusalem and Calvary; for on the cross Christ triumphed over death, sin, the devil and hell; as the Apostle teaches, Coloss. ii., 15.

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*The Son of Man is betrayed*, &c. "For," says Rabanus, "Judas betrayed the Lord to the Jews, and they delivered Him to the Gentiles, *i.e.*, to Pilate and the Romans. To this end the Lord refused prosperity in this world, but chose rather to suffer affliction, that He might shew us who have fallen by delights through what bitterness we must needs return; whence it follows *to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify.*" "The whole salvation of men," says S. Chrysostom, "rests on the death of Christ; wherefore there is nothing for which we are more bound to render thanks to God than for His death. He imparted the mystery of His death to His Apostles in secret, because the more precious treasure is ever committed to the more worthy vessels." And again, "when sorrow comes at a time we are looking for it, it is found lighter than it would have been had it come upon us suddenly."

*To mock, and to scourge, and to crucify.* These were the three principal parts of the passion of Christ.

*And the third day He shall rise again.* This is the honey of the resurrection in which is hidden the gall of the passion. Whence S. Augustine (*De Civ. l.* 18) says "In His passion He shews us how we ought to suffer for the truth; in His resurrection we ought to hope in the Trinity, whence He says 'and on the third day He shall rise again.'" And S. Chrysostom "This was said, that when they should see the sufferings, they should look for the resurrection." And S. Augustine adds the reason "For one death, that namely of the Saviour according to the body, was to us a salvation from two deaths, both of soul and body; and this one resurrection gained for us two resurrections."

*Morally*, Christ often repeats the mention of His passion, that He might commend His love to them, and they might love Him in return, and repay love for love, blood for blood, death for death. For the Cross of Christ is the furnace and fire of love. Wherefore S. Bernard (*De Quad. Deb.*) says "Thou owest to Jesus Christ thy whole life, because He laid down His life for thine, and endured bitter torments that thou mightest not endure eternal torments;" and in conclusion he says, "When therefore I have given Him all that I

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am, and all that I can, is it not like only a drop compared to a river, or a grain of sand to a heap?" And again he says (*Tract. de dilig. Deo*) "If I owe my whole self in return for my creation, what can I add now for my re-creation, and for my re-creation in such a manner? For it was more easy to create me than to re-create me. For He who created me at once and with a word only, in re-creating me spoke many words, and performed wonderful acts, and endured afflictions, and not only afflictions, but indignities: in His first work He gave me to myself, in His second He gave Himself to me; and when He gave Himself He restored me to myself. For my creation and for my re-creation I owe myself for myself, and that doubly. What shall I give to God for Himself? for even if I could repay myself a thousand times over, what am I compared with God?"

For the sake of Christ therefore we should not refuse to endure reproaches, crosses and flames; for to Him belongs our life and all that we are, for He Himself bought and redeemed us not with gold, but with the Divine price of His own blood. S. Leo (*Serm.* 8, *de Pass.*) says, "Thy cross, O Christ, is the fountain of all blessings, by which is given to them that believe strength out of weakness, glory out of reproach, life out of death."

*Then came to Him the mother*, &c. *Then*, when they had heard from Christ that His death was at hand, and after death His Resurrection, after which they expected the glorious kingdom of Christ; wherefore they lose no time in making a request that they may themselves obtain the chief place in it above the other Apostles.

*The mother of Zebedee's children.* By name Salome. See S. Mark xv. 40., S. Matthew xxvii. 56. S. Mark says that the petition came not from the mother but from the sons. The petition of the mother proceeded from the petition of the sons, so that the sons spoke by the mouth of their mother.

*A certain thing*; saying, as S. Mark has it, *we would that Thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire*, for they feared that if they expressed their desire for the first place Christ would at once refuse it. They wish therefore to bind Christ by a general petition, which if He granted He would be unable to refuse the particular petition. This is he manner of women. In the same way Bath-

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sheba introduced her petition to Solomon to give Abishag to Adonijah in marriage, 1 Kings ii. 21, Solomon consented; but afterwards when she made her request known he refused, saying, Ask for him the kingdom.

Verse 21. *And He said unto her*, &c. Christ wisely refuses the general petition, and would have her express it particularly, lest she should be asking for something foolish and unworthy, which He foresaw she would do, in order that He might teach us to do like He did.

*She said to Him*, &c. S. Chrysostom says, "They wished, since they had heard that the disciples should sit upon twelve thrones, to obtain the primacy of that seat, and they knew that they would be preferred before the rest with the exception of Peter; but fearing that Peter was preferred before them, they dared to say, 'Grant that one of us may sit on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left.'" We may learn from this how bold and blind and insatiable ambition is to which she incited these two Apostles, because they had seen that in the Transfiguration which was the beginning of Christ's kingdom they were preferred by Christ to the other Apostles.

But the mother is to be excused because she makes her request of Christ, her kinsman according to the flesh, for her sons whom she loved, even more than herself. So S. Jerome says, "The mother asks this from womanly error, and affectionate piety, not knowing what she was asking."

In the same way or manner S. Chrysostom excuses her sons. "Let not any one," he says, "be disturbed at our saying that the Apostles were so imperfect, for the mystery of the Cross had not yet been consummated; the grace of the Spirit had not yet been infused into their hearts. Wherefore if you wish to learn what their virtues were, consider what they were after the Spirit had been given, and you will see that all restlessness of mind was removed from them. For this reason only their imperfection is made known that you may perceive clearly what they were suddenly made by grace."

*Ye know not what ye ask.* Because ye know not, in the first place, of what sort My kingdom is—namely, a spiritual and heavenly one,

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not a carnal and an earthly one. Secondly, because ye are asking for the triumph before the victory; "for the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Thirdly, because you suppose that this kingdom is given by right of blood to those who seek it, whereas it is given only to those who deserve and strive. Let bishops and princes, then, follow this example of Christ, and make answer to their friends, their sons, and to importunate women, when they ask them for prebends, dignities, and appointments for which they are unfitted, "Ye know not what ye ask." My prebends and appointments are not mine to give as I please, and because I so choose, to my relations and servants; I am a steward, not an owner; God will require an exact account of my stewardship. For great is the injury to Christ and His Church, and it is the cause of many evils, if appointments and benefices are given on account of relationship and friendship, to unworthy persons.

*Ye know not what ye ask.* First, because ye think that My kingdom is an earthly one, and one of outward show, like that of David and Solomon; whereas it is spiritual and heavenly. So S. Chrysostom says: "He says this to show that they were seeking nothing spiritual." Secondly, because they were asking for what had already been promised—namely, to sit with Christ, and with Him to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. So S. Hilary: "They know not what they ask, because there was no doubt about the glory of the Apostles, for His former discourse had made it clear to them that they should judge the world." But among these thrones they seemed to have asked for the first, and the next to Christ, though they had not yet been specially promised by Christ to them. Thirdly, because they were asking for what exceeded the measure of their gifts and merits. Bede says: "They know not what they ask when they ask for a throne of glory which they had not yet merited." For the first thrones in Heaven belong to those who are of greater—yea, of the greatest—merit. Fourthly, because they were asking at an unsuitable time, when the Passion of Christ was at hand. As S. Chrysostom says: "Ye speak of honour, but I speak of labours and toil; for this is no time for rewards, but rather for slaughter, battles, and

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perils." Fifthly, because they were asking for what was contrary to their vocation; for they were called to follow Christ in His poverty and cross, not to strive after honours. Sixthly, because they ought to have sought for the labours of the cross, by which they might merit honours. Seventhly, because they asked to sit on the left hand as well as on the right. For those condemned in the judgment will stand on Christ's left hand; which is, says S. Chrysostom, as it were to say, "I have called you to My right hand, and you wilfully are hastening from My right hand to My left." But this is a mystical meaning; the most suitable meanings are the first, the third, and the sixth.

*Are ye able*, &c. Through the Cross and Passion the way lies for Me to My kingdom, therefore the same way might be trodden by you if you desire it. S. Bernard says, that "Christ like a good and wise physician first drank the draught Himself which He was preparing for His own, *i.e.*, He underwent His Passion and Death, and so He became immortal and impassible; thus teaching His own how they might confidently drink the draught which produces soundness and life." S. Chrysostom and Theophylact say that Christ called His Passion a cup, because He so willingly endured, and, as it were, drained it, as a thirsty man would a cup of wine. In Scripture, and among profane writers, the cup signifies the lot, whether good or evil, which God appoints, and as it were administers to each man.

S. Cyprian, understanding martyrdom by the cup, says, "A fiercer conflict is now at hand (for God had revealed to him that the Valerian persecution was coming), for which the soldiers of Christ ought to prepare themselves with firm courage, considering that for that very reason they daily drink the cup of the blood of Christ, so that they may also themselves be able to shed their blood for the sake of Christ." For at that time they used to communicate daily, and that under both kinds, bread and wine. S. Chrysostom remarks how "Christ encourages and draws them on by the way in which He puts the question. For He did not say, can ye shed your blood, but *can ye drink the cup?* Then, drawing them on, He says,

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*which I shall drink of*, so that by sharing with Him in His labours they may be rendered more ready to undergo the same."

Christ also calls His Passion a baptism, because in it He was wholly immersed and plunged, *i.e.*, He died.

*They say, We are able.* John and James seem to have understood the meaning of the cup; and yet as they had shown their ambition in asking for the primacy, so they rashly answer, that they can drink the cup, whereas, in truth, they could not yet do so; but afterwards they were able, through the grace of Christ given by the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost.

Verse 23. *And He saith to them*, &c. Christ here foretells the martyrdom of James and John. For S. James, preaching Christ more fervently than the other Apostles, first suffered martyrdom for Him, being slain by Herod with the sword. S. John also drank of this cup when he was plunged by Domitian, at Rome, before the Latin Gate, into a cauldron of boiling oil, and came forth renewed in strength; so that by a new miracle he was a martyr by living rather by dying.

Again, not only Prochorus, S. John's disciple, in his *Life of S. John* (the truth of which is rightly suspected by Baronius), but also S. Isidore declares that S. John really drank the cup of poison, but that he also drank it without harm; whence also he is generally represented in pictures holding a cup. And, lastly, we may say that the whole life of S. John was a continual martyrdom, for he lived a very long time after all the Apostles, to the year of our Lord 101; and this long absence from Christ, his beloved—after Whom he was continually longing—was a lengthened martyrdom to him, as it was also to the Blessed Virgin, to whom he had been given as a son by Christ on the Cross.

Again, S. John underwent a special martyrdom while he stood with the Blessed Virgin by the Cross on Mount Calvary, and beheld Christ—his Life, Whom he loved more than his own life—suffering the bitter pains of the Cross for three hours.

*But to sit on my right hand*, &c. The Arians thought that it is here said that it was not in the power of Christ to give this, but of



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the Father, and consequently, that Christ was not equal (Greek, ὁμοούσιος) to the Father; but they are in error. For Christ is here putting an antithesis, not between Himself and the Father, but between James and John (who were ambitiously seeking the first place in His kingdom) and those to whom it of right belonged. The point of the argument lies in the word *you*, which is read in the Vulgate, though not in the Greek and other versions. Whence Remigius says: "It is not Mine to give to you—*i.e.*, to proud men, such as you are, but to the humble." Again: It is not Mine to give to you as My kinsmen according to the flesh; for it is given not to the person, but to the life (as S. Jerome says), not from favour, but according to merit.

Mark, that Christ does not grant what these two ask for, that the rest of the Apostles may not be provoked through being excluded; nor does He refuse it, so as to make these two sad. So S. Jerome: "He said not, 'Ye shall not sit there,' that He might not discourage the two brethren; neither did He say, 'Ye shall sit there,' that He might not stir the others to anger;" but by holding up the prize before all, He might encourage all to strive for Him. So a just king, presiding over a contest instituted by him, if his kinsmen and friends should come to him and say, "Give us the prize," justly makes answer—"It is not mine to give the prize to you, but to those for whom it is prepared and decreed, namely, to those who strive in the contest and gain the mastery."

Again it is clear from S. Luke xxii. 29, 30, that this kingdom is Christ's to bestow. *I appoint unto you a kingdom as My Father hath appointed unto Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* Christ, however, says here that it belongs rather to the Father, both because as man He was always subject to the Father, and also that by giving them a proper reason He might send them away from Himself and refer them to the Father, so that they might humble themselves before Him; and be prevented by shame from asking for it; and also lastly because as wisdom and works of wisdom are proper to the Son and works of goodness to the Holy Spirit, so works of power

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and providence, to which it belongs to predestinate men to the kingdom, are proper to the Father.

*But to those for whom it is prepared of My Father.* The interpretation of Euthymius is narrow, who explains *those* as being Peter and Paul. Narrower still is the interpretation of Hilary who says that Moses and Elias are meant; for he thinks that the Transfiguration is alluded to in which Moses and Elias saw the glory of Christ in His kingdom and shared in it. Narrowest of all is the interpretation of S. Chrysostom, who says that the place on the right hand and on the left will be given to none; because no one, he says, can be exalted to the right hand of Christ, since He alone sits at the right hand of the Father. But these interpretations are too narrow, for Christ speaks generally of all the elect. Wherefore the highest places in the kingdom of Heaven are prepared by God for those who after striving most earnestly gain the victory. Wherefore by the right and left hand are to be understood pre-eminence in the kingdom, which will be granted to those who are first in humility, charity, patience, and zeal in preaching the Gospel. The Abbot Athanasius, we read, was caught up into Heaven and heard the choirs of the blessed singing the praises of God, and when he would join their company he heard a voice which said to him "no one enters here who has lived carelessly, go thy way, strive diligently, and despise the vanities of the world." It is also related of the holy Furseus (*Bede, Hist. Ang. lib.* 3, *cap.* 19) that he was caught up to Heaven and heard the angels and saints singing. "They shall go from strength to strength: unto the God of gods shall they appear in Sion." Let us advance therefore from strength to strength, and we shall ascend from glory to glory, from angels to Cherubim and Seraphim, from the lowest to the highest throne in Heaven.

*And when the ten heard it,* &c. You will ask how it was that the other Apostles heard the request of the two brethren. The most probable opinion is that of Francis Lucas, who says that Salome and her sons spoke privately with Christ, but that He answered so that the rest should hear what He said and understand from His answer what the two had asked for. For He knew that they were



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all suffering from the same disease of ambition, and He wished to heal them all. Also since they were infected with the same desire, they detected the desire of the others: for every one measures others by himself, and imagines that they have the same desires and ambition as himself.

The ten were not so much displeased at the ambition of James and John as troubled with the fear that they would be placed after them; for they too desired the first place; so dogs, though at other times friendly, are angry and snarl at each other when they are gnawing the same bone.

Ambition indeed begets envy, and envy begets anger in him who desires the same honour lest it be taken from him by another. S. Basil, in his homily against envy, mentions an effectual remedy against this vice, "not to set a high value on anything belonging to this world, such as wealth or glory; for he who has succeeded in subjecting all worldly things to his reason, and has devoted himself to the pursuit of the true beauty and honour, will be very far from esteeming any one happy, or to be envied on account of any worldly advantages; and he who is of such a spirit as never to admire anything belonging to this life will never be under the dominion of envy."

*Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles*, &c. Christ here does not find fault with the civil or ecclesiastical power which is exercised by princes and bishops, as the Anabaptists maintain; for this is needful in every commonwealth for good government. A tyrant does not care for the interests of those under him, but consults only his own advantage and honour. Whereas true princes seek the good of their subjects, and are the servants rather than the lords of the commonwealth, as Aristotle says.

*And they that are great*, &c. That is, they rule imperiously, and exercise an irresponsible power over those subject to them.

*It shall not be so among you*, &c. The Vulgate reads in verse 27, *will be your servant*, and with it agree the Syriac, Egyptian, and Æthiopic versions. In these words Christ teaches not so much the way and means by which a man may obtain the primacy in the

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Church as how one who is a primate ought to behave himself in the Church, namely as the least of all; and by setting before them this rule of humility He deters the Apostles from ambitiously seeking the chief place. It is plain that this is the meaning because this verse is in antithesis with the preceding: for He contrasts His own gentle, benignant and wholesome rule with the imperious and tyrannical authority that is exercised over the Gentiles. S. Gregory (*Pastor. part* 2, *c.* 6), teaches how a prelate ought to unite authority with gentleness, and act with authority against the refractory and with gentleness towards the obedient, "Let a ruler," he says, "be a companion in humility to those who do well, but let him be firmly opposed with a righteous zeal against the faults of delinquents."

At the same time Christ shows in these words by what way we ought to advance towards the highest place in Heaven, namely, by the way of humility. And for this reason the Pope prefers this title, *Servant of the servants of Christ.* This is what S. Peter, the Vicar of Christ, taught the pastors of the Church, "Feed the flock of God, which is among you, &c. (1 *Epist. v.* 2.)

Likewise on account of this saying of Christ S. Francis wished the prelates of his Order to be called ministers and brothers minor (minorite friars), both that he might employ the very words of the Gospel, which he had promised to observe, and that his disciples might learn by their very name that they had come to the school of Christ to learn humility. For Christ, the Teacher of humility, that He might give His disciples a perfect rule of humility said, "Whosoever will be chief among you let him be your minister, &c."

*Even as the Son of Man*, &c. S. Francis Xavier furnished a rare example of this humility of Christ, and recalled it to this age when it had, as it were, gone out of fashion. For when he was appointed by the Pope Apostolic Legate of India, he would have no servant, although the Viceroy of the King of Portugal offered him several, and urged him to accept them; but he ministered to all, both in bodily and spiritual services. He used himself to hear the confessions of the sick, and comfort the sorrowful; he used to administer medicines to the sick, and cleanse their bodies and wash their

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bandages, and catechise the ignorant and children; and besides he used to attend to and feed the horses of his companions: and when some one said that these things were unworthy of an Apostolic Legate, he answered that there was nothing more worthy than Christian charity and humility which became all things to all men that it may gain all: which Christ through His whole life continually enjoined by word and deed. So that by this conduct he did not lose, but increased his authority. Moreover Christ himself while on earth had not even one servant, but made himself the servant of all. S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 40, *the Epis. to the Cors.*) says, "Listen to Paul; *these hands*, he says, *have ministered to my necessities and to them that were with me.* That teacher of the world, and man worthy of heaven, scrupled not to serve innumerable mortals; while you think it a disgrace unless you have your herds of servants in your train: not seeing that this is a great disgrace to you. God gave us hands and feet that we might do without servants. What is the use of crowds of servants?"

*A ransom for many.* Not as if Christ died only for the predestinated, as the heretics formerly called Predestinarians, and Calvin, in recent times, maintained: for that Christ suffered and died for all men S. Paul clearly teaches (2 *Cor.* v. 14. *and* 1 *S. John Epist.* ii. 2). The words *for many* are put *for all*, Euthymius says, because these all were not few but many. So many is taken for *all* in this chapter v. 16, and chapter xxvi. 28, and Romans v. 19, and elsewhere. Or *for many*; because although Christ died for all, and obtained for all and bestowed upon all means sufficient for salvation, yet the fruit of His death, and salvation in its completeness falls to the share of the just only and those who persevere until death in righteousness. So S. Jerome, Maldonatus and others.

*And as they departed from Jericho.* Christ was going from the city of Ephrem, through Jericho which which lay between, to Jerusalem —to the death of the Cross.

Jericho was distant from Jerusalem one hundred and fifty stadia, and from Ephrem on the Jordan sixty stadia, according to Josephus. The journey to Jericho is easy and along a plain, but from Jericho to Jerusalem it is mountainous, steep and difficult.

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Jericho in Hebrew is derived from ירח, *the moon*, because it is of the form of the moon, or from ריח, *odour* or *scent*, because the balsam, a plant of very sweet odour, grows there.

*Symbolically.* Rabanus says that Jericho, which is interpreted "the moon," denotes the infirmity of our changefulness and mortality, and therefore these blind men were found there. Again S. Gregory (*Hom.* 12, *in Evangel.*) says, "Jericho is interpreted 'the moon,' and the moon in Scripture is put for the infirmity of the flesh. While therefore our Creator is drawing nigh to Jericho, the blind man is returning to the light; because while Divinity takes upon itself the infirmity of our flesh, the human race regained the light which it had lost."

*Mystically.* Origen says, "By Jericho is understood the world into which Christ descended. Those who are in Jericho know not how to escape from the wisdom of the world, unless they see not Jesus only coming out of Jericho, but His disciples. This when they saw, great multitudes despised the world and all worldly things, that under the guidance of Christ they might go up to the Heavenly Jerusalem."

*Behold two blind men*, &c. This is the same history that S. Mark relates (chap. x. 46); he mentions only one blind man, Bartimæus. S. Augustine (*lib.* 2 *de cons. Evang. ch.* 65) says that there were two blind men, one of whom was very well known in that city; "for Bartimæus, the son of Timæus," he says, "had sunk from great wealth, and was now sitting, not only as blind, but as a beggar. For this reason then Mark chose to mention him alone, because the restoration of his sight procured fame to this miracle in proportion to the notoriety of the fact of his blindness."

Moreover, S. Augustine, Jansen, and others, are of opinion that this blind man was not the same as the one of whom S. Luke speaks, ch. xviii. 35, because S. Luke says that he was healed as they drew near to Jericho, while this one was healed as they came out. But since S. Luke's narrative agrees in all points with that of S. Matthew and S. Mark, we must suppose that it was one and the same blind man whose prayer to Christ for the restoration of his sight was not

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heard on account of the crowd, and Christ made as though He heard him not, that he might quicken his faith and hope, and then on the following day he repeated his prayer as Christ went out and obtained it. So S. Ambrose, Maldonatus, and others explain it.

*Allegorically.* Origen and S. Ambrose say that the two blind men were Judah and Israel, who before the coming of Christ were blind because they saw not the true Word which was contained in the law and the prophets. But Rabanus, with S. Augustine, says that they were the Jews and the Gentiles, for they were both ignorant of the way of salvation. But S. Chrysostom understands them of the Gentiles only, who are descended partly from Ham and partly from Japhet.

*Tropologically*, by the two blind men we may understand the two-fold blindness of the affections and of the understanding.

*Have mercy on us*, &c. That is, "O Messiah, of whom the prophets foretold that He should be born of David: it is a mark of the Messiah to have mercy on the miserable, and to give sight to the blind (Isaiah xxxv. 5). We believe that Thou art the Messiah; therefore give us sight that all may know that Thou art the Messiah, and may believe and worship Thee."

*The multitude rebuked*, &c. That they being mean men should not disturb Christ, who perhaps was teaching; or delay Him on this journey. So Euthymius.

*Mystically:* S. Gregory (*Hom. 2, in Evang.*) understands by the multitude the crowds of carnal desires, which before Jesus comes to our heart, by their temptations dissipate our meditation, and drown the voice of the heart in prayer.

*But they cried the more*, &c. Because there was need of a louder cry that they might be heard by Christ above the noise of the crowd.

*Morally.* S. Augustine (*de Verb. Dom. Ser.* 18), explains it thus, "Every Christian who has begun to live well, and to despise the world, at the commencement of his new life has to endure the censures of cold Christians, but if he perseveres, those who at first hindered him will soon comply." The fear of man then must be

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overcome by one who wishes to serve God. The first virtue of a Christian, as S. Jerome says, is to despise and to be despised.

S. Hilary says, "Faith, when it is called, is the more inflamed, and so in the midst of dangers it is secure, and in the midst of security, it is endangered."

*And Jesus stood still*, &c. S. Jerome says, "Jesus stood still because they being blind could not see their way: about Jericho there were many pits, crags, and steep places, therefore the Lord stands still that they might come to Him."

S. Gregory (*Hom. 2, in Evang.*) interprets *symbolically*, "to pass by is the property of the human nature, to stand still of the Divine. The Lord as He passed by heard the cry of the blind man, but when He restored his sight He stood still.

*Anagogically*, S. Augustine (*Lib. 1. quæst. Evang. c. 8*), "Faith in His temporal Incarnation prepares us for the understanding of things eternal; for things temporal pass by, but things eternal stand still."

*And called them.* S. Jerome says: "He commands that they be called, that the multitude may not hinder them; and He asks what they would, that by their answer their necessity may be made clear, and His power be known in their healing."

*What will ye?* He was not ignorant of their desire, but though He knew it, He wills to hear their confession of it.

*They say unto Him*, &c. Nothing is naturally so much desired by man as to see; so that to see seems like life, and not to see like death and continual sorrow.

S. Augustine, writing on these words, says: "The whole object of life is the healing of the eyes of the heart so that we may behold. To this end the sacred mysteries are celebrated, the Word of God is preached, the moral exhortations of the Church are made—that is, those which pertain to the correction of morals, and to the renunciation of this world; not in word only, but by a change of life. To this end the Divine Scriptures direct their aim, that our inward eye may be purged from that thing whatever it is which hinders us from beholding God."

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Let the man, then, who is blinded by sin and concupiscence say, Grant me, O Lord, to see the baseness of sin, the vileness of concupiscence, the worthlessness of pleasure, the fierceness of hell-fire; the beauty of virtue, the blessedness of Paradise, the eternity of glory; so that I may despise all concupiscence, and aim at the practice of virtue.

*So Jesus had compassion on them.* S. Jerome says: "Jesus considering their ready will, rewards it by fully granting their desire. Whence He says in another place, *Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*"

*And they followed Him.* "These blind men," S. Chrysostom says, "as before this bounty they were persevering, so after receiving it they were not ungrateful;" for, when healed, they offered a good service to Christ in following Him. For this is what God requires of thee—"to walk circumspectly (Vulg., *sollicitum*) with thy God."

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## CHAPTER XXI.

1 *Christ rideth into Jerusalem upon an ass.* 12 *Driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple.* 17 *Curseth the fig tree.* 23 *Putteth to silence the priests and elders,* 28 *And rebuketh them by the similitude of the two sons,* 33 *And the husbandmen, who slew such as were sent unto them.*

AND when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me.

3 And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them.

7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon.

8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.

9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

10 And when he came into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

12 ¶ And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves.

13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

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15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David: they were sore displeased.

16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

17 ¶ And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

20 And when the disciples saw *it*, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

23 ¶ And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

28 ¶ But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.

29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterwards he repented and went.

30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, sir: and went not.

31 Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

33 ¶ Hear another parable: There was a certain housholder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:

34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

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35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise.

37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

39 And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*.

40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

*And when they were come nigh*, &c. Mark has (xi. 1), "And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, He sendeth forth two of His disciples," and Luke adds (xix. 29), "And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, He sent two of His disciples." But Mark and Luke are speaking generally, because Bethphage, Jerusalem, and Bethany are all nigh to each other. For coming to particulars it is clear from S. John (xii. 1, 12) that on the preceding Sabbath Christ supped, and passed the night at Bethany, and on the following day, or Palm Sunday, He came nearer to Jerusalem, that is to say, to Bethphage, and from thence sent His disciples to fetch the ass with her colt. For Bethphage was nearer to Jerusalem. Whence from Bethany through Bethphage, the Mount of Olives and the valley of Jehoshaphat was the road to Jerusalem. The valley of Jehoshaphat is close to Jerusalem. The brook Kedron flows through it. After this

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valley you come to the mount of Olives, then to the village of Bethphage, and then to Bethany.

*Bethphage*, in Hebrew, means the *house of the mouth*, or, *at the mouth of the valley*. *Beth* is a *house*, *phe*, the *mouth*, *ge*, a *valley*. For this village of Bethphage was seated at the foot of Mount Olivet, in a sort of cleft, or as it were *mouth* of the hill. Again this village was situated, as we may say, at the mouth, or entrance of the valley of Jehoshaphat. And this entrance is extremely narrow, as you come from Bethphage into the valley, and so on through the golden gate to the Temple. Whence it is very probable, as Jansen and Adrichomius say, that Bethphage was a village of the priests, in which lambs, goats, and oxen were kept ready for the temple sacrifices. Thus from Bethphage the priests were wont to fetch the paschal lambs, and other victims to the temple. From this cause too, when Christ willed to be brought in triumph from Bethphage through the golden gate unto Jerusalem He would show that He was the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world, prefigured by the paschal lambs.

Again, He wished in His triumphal entry to pass through the valley of Jehoshaphat, in order to intimate, that in that same valley He will, in the day of Judgment, pass His tremendous judgment upon all men. Now therefore He rides through the valley in triumph to Jerusalem, as her Lord and King, and, thus, as it were, takes possession of His kingdom, which He will bring to a glorious consummation in the Day of Judgment. It is as if He said, "Acknowledge Me, O ye Jews, to be your Messiah, believe and obey Me, that in the day of Judgment, which I will accomplish in this valley, I may award you Heaven. But if ye persist in your unbelief, I shall adjudge you to hell. Wherefore also, I come from Bethany, where a few days since I raised up Lazarus from the dead, which ye have all seen and wondered at, that by it, and My other miracles ye may know that I am your Messiah, the Saviour of the world."

*Then Jesus sent*, &c. S. Hilary, Bede, and the *Gloss* think that these two were Peter and Philip; but Origen and Theophylact think they were Peter and Paul—that is, typically, in such sort that the

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two who were sent represented Peter and Paul; the one, who was about to be the Apostle of the Jews, the other, who was to become the Apostle of the Gentiles. For Paul was not as yet converted to Christ. With greater probability, Jansen thinks these two were Peter and John: for soon after this Christ sent them to prepare the paschal lamb. But nothing is certain.

*Saying*, &c. Greek, εἰς κώμην κατέναντι ὑμῶν, *i.e.*, into the village which is opposite to you. From whence it is plain that it is not Jerusalem which is meant, as Lyra thinks, but either Bethphage, as Jansen supposes, or some village opposite to Bethphage, as Adrichomius thinks. For Christ had already come to Bethphage, as I have said in verse 1; unless you prefer to understand *when He came to Bethphage*, when He was *coming to* or *approaching* Bethany.

*And straightway ye shall find*, &c. Christ here beheld things absent, the ass and her colt, as though they were present. He surely made them known to His Apostles by the gift of prophecy, which His Divinity bestowed upon His humanity. Thus He here gave a proof of His Divinity.

Hear how blessed Peter Damian *tropologically* applies all the circumstances of this journey to the conversion of a sinner. (*Hom. in Dom. Palm.*) "Bethphage is interpreted to mean, *the house of the mouth;* and it is *the understanding of the priests*, by which confession is meant. Thither the Lord cometh, because He kindles the heart to make confession. The *castle* (as the Latin has instead of *village*), which is opposite to the Lord and His disciples, is a mind obstinately bent upon its own will. The *two disciples* who are sent to it are *Hope* and *Fear*. The *ass* and her *colt tied* are *Humility* and *Simplicity*. For the mind of such a person sometimes knows what humility and simplicity are, and how he ought to live humbly and simply. But he, as it were, *binds* them, and *sets them aside*, when he is not willing to live accordingly. This man fear terrifies, when he draws back from evil, threatening him with torments. Hope comforts him if he repents, by the promise of rewards. By these two the mind is pricked. The *ass and the colt are loosed*, when meeting the Lord in the way to Bethphage, he confesses that he hath

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sinned, and promises that he will live humbly and simply for the time to come. And thus he who aforetime was a castle of the devil becomes Sion, the city of our strength. The Saviour is placed in it for a wall and a bulwark. The wall is humility, the bulwark is patience. Therefore, dearly beloved, let us go forth to meet the Lord at Bethphage, pricked with fear of punishment, and strengthened by the hope of heavenly life, confessing our sins with humility and simplicity, treading down the garments of our carnality, that the Lord may deign to sit upon us, and to bring us with Himself into the Heavenly Jerusalem."

*And if any man*, &c. *The Lord:* for I am indeed Messiah, the Lord and God of all things. Christ did not wish that the ass and her colt should be taken away against the owner's will. For as His Providence worketh mightily, so also sweetly. By the power of His Divinity He influenced their minds, so that they should assent to the Apostles loosing the ass, yea that they should co-operate with them.

Christ, Who for three years had always gone on foot, and thus had traversed the whole of Judea, wished to show that He was the King of Judea, the Messiah, the Son of David. Therefore does He enter Jerusalem, which was the metropolis of Judea in regal pomp. But He is not carried on a horse with splendid trappings, or in a gilded chariot, with an acompanying multitude of noble knights, with trumpets sounding, resplendent in purple robes, as the kings of the earth are wont to do. But He is carried on an ass, to show that His kingdom is of another sort, spiritual and heavenly, and therefore meek and lowly, despising pomp. Nevertheless asses in Judea are better and stronger than our asses, more like mules. The sons of princes were accustomed to ride on asses. (See Judg. xii. 14.) "Christ," says *Auctor Imperfecti*, "sits upon the ass of tranquillity and peace, which is most patient to bear labours and burdens. You see not round about Him glittering swords, or the other ornaments of dreadful arms. But what do you see? leafy boughs, the tokens of affection. He came in meekness that he might not be dreaded because of His power, but that he might be loved for His gentleness."

*All this was done*, &c. *The prophet*, Zachariah. *Tell ye the*

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*daughter of Sion.* Some think these words are a quotation from Isaiah lxii. 11, as though Matthew put the quotation together from Isaiah and Zechariah. More simply, F. Lucas and others think Christ cited Zechariah only, but his meaning, not his exact words. *Tell ye therefore the daughter of Sion* is the same as, *exult greatly* (the Hebrew *meod* is *very much*), *O daughter of Sion, shout O daughter of Jerusalem*, as Zechariah has (ix. 9), for thy King Messias is coming to thee to save thee. Zechariah is exhorting the citizens of Jerusalem to receive with eagerness their Messiah and Saviour riding on an ass.

Observe: Jerusalem is called the *daughter of Sion*, either by synecdoche, in that from Sion, the higher part of the city, the whole was called Sion; or else by a metaphor, in that the city of Jerusalem, lying below Mount Sion, and protected by it, and reposing like a daughter on her mother's bosom, was called *the daughter of Sion.* Moreover by Jerusalem are to be understood the citizens and inhabitants of Jerusalem.

*Mystically*, these things are true in the Christian Church, which as Jerusalem and the daughter of Sion is *the vision of peace*, and therefore always rejoices with Christ.

*Behold thy king*, &c. Zechariah has, *son of an ass*, the Vulgate has *subjugalis, under the yoke*, because it bears the yoke of the man riding upon it.

I have explained the other things pertaining to this prophecy on Zechariah ix. 9.

*His disciples went*, &c. The prompt obedience of the disciples should be remarked, which deserved the prompt compliance of the owner of the ass, so that he suffered his ass to be taken away together with her foal, as Christ had predicted. He doubted not that they would be brought back to him.

*And they brought*, &c., *spread their clothes*, Gr. ἱμάτια, i.e., their cloaks, or outer garments, as it were in adornment. *Placed Him thereon*: many existing MSS. together with the Syriac have, *He sat upon him*, i.e., the colt. It is most probable that Christ sat both upon the ass as well as her colt in succession. First He made use of the ass, then of the colt. The colt perchance was not strong



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enough to bear a rider in the descent and ascent of the mountain: the ass was not so becoming for the entry into the city. But it was chiefly because of the mystery implied that He willed to make use of both the beasts, that he might signify that He should reign not over those only to whom He had been promised, i.e., the Jews, but over the two sorts of people of which the world is made up—the Jews, accustomed to the yoke of the Mosaic law, who were represented by the ass; and the Gentiles, living up to this time without the Law of God, and who were denoted by the colt. "For as sinners," says *Auctor Imperfecti*, "are the horses of the devil, so are the saints said to be the horses of Christ, although Christ loves mild asses, rather than fierce and proud horses."

These disciples, together with the multitude, were inspired and acted upon by the Holy Ghost, or else by Christ's own Divinity to make the adornment of this royal pomp. They clothed the ass with their garments as with regal trappings; and they made Christ to sit thereon, that they might render Him homage as the Messiah, and inaugurate His reign as King of Jerusalem. Christ instigated and directed it all, that He might give an idea of His kingdom, united, however, with poverty and humility, for which reason he rode upon a despised and lowly ass.

Observe: Christ wished to adorn His royal entrance into Jerusalem with this unaccustomed pomp for various reasons. The first was that he might give an indication of His royal power and magnificence, because the Jews thought that He would come in such a manner, like another Solomon. Christ therefore presented Himself to them with this appearance of pomp, that they might not despise and reject Him as they had hitherto done. And yet He acted in such a manner as to show them that Messiah's kingdom was spiritual rather than temporal. And He willed that all these things should be foretold by Zechariah, lest the Jews should despise this King when He came without royal dignity. So S. Chrysostom and Eusebius (*lib.* 8, *demonst. c.* 4). The second and accompanying reason was that Christ would present Himself to the Scribes and Pharisees in His royal entrance, that they might, as they ought to, be able to recognise Him

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by this means to be the Messiah, forasmuch as He had been so prophesied of by Zechariah. The third reason was, that He might correspond to the type of the Paschal Lamb. For it, on the tenth day of the first month, was brought with solemn pomp into the city, that it might be sacrificed on the fourteenth day. So Christ, as the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, entered into Jerusalem on the tenth, or Palm Sunday. And He entered in pomp and with the auspicious acclamations of the multitude, forasmuch as He was certain of triumphing over death and sin and hell, and so made His triumph to precede His battle, and in triumph He entered on His contest.

The fourth reason was *tropological*—viz., that He might by this deed deride the world's glory; forasmuch as He knew that five days after He would be crucified by those by whom He had been honoured at this entry, and that those who were now crying out *Hosanna to the Son of David* would cry before Pilate's judgment-seat, *Crucify Him, crucify Him;* and, therefore, that this city would be utterly destroyed by the Romans, under Titus. Wherefore, even in this joyful entry, foreseeing this, He wept, as Luke says (xix. 41). Again, He would teach that His kingdom consists in this life of suffering and the cross, and that we must not turn away from them, but embrace them and come to them with a joyful mind and with solemn pomp. Wherefore, the martyrs, as followers of Christ, went to their martyrdom as to a banquet—yea, to a kingdom and a triumph—with white robes, and attended with throngs of the faithful. Thus did S. Agatha, S. Cecilia, S. Agnes, S. Laurence, &c.

*A great multitude*, &c.; *branches*, of palms, olives, and other fruit trees, in which the Mount of Olives abounds, as S. Jerome says: for this multitude, not having carpets (which are accustomed to be laid down for royal progresses), laid down their garments for Christ, stripping themselves as a notable mark of their reverence for Him. These things happened on the twentieth of March; for in Palestine, which is a hot country, the trees are then in full leaf.

*Tropologically.* Remigius says: "The Lord came to Jerusalem sitting upon an ass, because He presides over the holy Church and



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the faithful soul, and rules it in this life, and afterwards introduces it to the vision of the celestial country. The Apostles and other Doctors placed their garments upon the ass, because they gave to the Gentiles the glory which they had received from Christ. But the multitude spread their garments in the way, because those of the circumcision who believed despised the glory which they had from the Law. And they cut down branches from the trees, because they received testimonies from the prophets, who flourished, as it were, from Christ, the Tree. Or the multitude which strawed their garments in the way signifies the martyrs, who gave their bodies, the garments of their souls, to martyrdom for the sake of Christ. Or they who tame their bodies by abstinence are signified. But they who cut down branches from the trees are those who search for the sayings and examples of the holy Fathers, for the salvation of themselves and of their children."

*But the multitudes which went before*, &c. S. John (xii. 12) says: *On the morrow—i.e.*, Palm Sunday, or the day after the Sabbath, on which Jesus had come to Bethany—"much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord"—that is, Messias, whom, as the Divine king, we have been expecting for so many thousand years. The multitude went out to meet Him with palms, as a conqueror, because formerly victors in the games were crowned with palms. Thus the Church expounds when, in the Benediction of Palms, she chants thus: "Therefore the branches of palms anticipate the triumph over the king of death; the sprays of olives verily, as it were, cry aloud that the spiritual anointing has come. For even then that blessed multitude of people understood that it was prefigured that the Redeemer, grieving for the misery of the human race, was about to fight with the prince of death for the life of the whole world, and to triumph by dying. Therefore they obediently rendered such services, which should set forth in Him both the triumphs of His victory and the riches of His mercy." For although the multitude did not know

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that in four days Christ was about to suffer upon the Cross, He knew it, and therefore He willed that this His triumph should be foreshown by the multitude with palms. And they brought Christ, as it were the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world, who was to be offered for its salvation upon the following Friday. For although they were at this time ignorant of the mystery of which the paschal lambs were types and figures, God, who foreknows all things, ordained them for the glory of Christ. Zechariah had predicted them, and so had David (Psalm cxviii. 25, &c.); and therefore the Jews, who would not believe in Christ, were without excuse. All this bringing the paschal lamb to Jerusalem was done in accordance with the law (Exodus xii. 3, 6), where the paschal lamb is ordered to be chosen on the tenth day of the first month. The tenth of Nisan fell that year on Palm Sunday, which was—according to our computation—that year the twentieth of March.

*Hosanna.* So the Egyptian and Arabic. The Syrian has *Ouschano*, the Ethiopic *Husanna*, the Persian *Husiana*. You will ask what is the meaning of Hosanna? 1. S. Hilary, on this passage, and from him S. Ambrose, think that Hosanna signifies *the redemption of the house of David.* But S. Jerome (*Epist. ad Dam.*) shows that this is a mistake.

2. S. Austin (*Tract.* 51 *in Joan.*) thinks Hosanna is an interjection of joy and supplication, like *well done! bravo!*

3. Euthymius says Hosanna means *praise*, being derived from עז, *hoz*—i.e., *strength*, which the Vulgate and LXX sometimes translate *praise*—and חנה, *chanah*, i.e., grace. Whence also the Greeks represent *Ho sanna* by two words.

But I say with S. Jerome, Theophylact, Pagninus, Jansen, and others that *Hosanna* is compounded of הושע, *hoscha*, *save*, and נא *na*, i.e., *I beseech.* Hosanna is therefore, *save, I beseech*, or *save now.* Hoscanna has been changed into Hosanna for the sake of euphony.

There is an allusion to Psalm cxviii. 25, 26, "Save me," though the word *me* is not in the Hebrew (for it seems to be not the voice of Christ but of the people praying for salvation from Christ), "O Lord, send now prosperity. Blessed be He that cometh in the name of

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the Lord." Symmachus translates, "I beseech, O Lord, save me, I beseech." The Hebrew is, *Anna Jehovah, hoscia na; anna Jehovah, hatslicha na*, i.e., *O Lord, save, I beseech; O Lord, prosper I beseech*, our King David and his antitype, Messiah. Give him a happy beginning of his reign, a happier progress in it, and a most happy conclusion. *Hosanna*, then, is an acclamation to the new king of Israel, at his proclamation, as we say, *God save the King.*

Hence, too, we have in the same Psalm, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (ver. 24): and the reason is given in the two previous verses, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." Where the Chaldee (paraphrase) applies it to David. David being first rejected, and afterwards made king, was, as it were, a corner stone, binding to himself Judah and Jerusalem, *i.e.*, the two, as well as the ten tribes. Still better does S. Matthew explain it of Christ, thus, Christ being rejected by the Jews in life, and crucified in death, became the corner stone of the Church after His resurrection, as containing and connecting the whole edifice of the Church by uniting both Jews and Gentiles in the one bosom of His Church; and thus it is that we sing Hosanna unto Him.

Some think *Hosanna* was taken from the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Jews, rejoicing with boughs of trees, were wont frequently to cry *Hosanna.* And in prayers and litanies to God, the whole multitude used to respond with the same word, *Hosanna*, i.e., *save us.* As Christians in their litanies at each of the suffrages relating to pestilence, famine, war, and so on, respond, *Good Lord, deliver us.* Wherefore also the Jews were accustomed to call the boughs themselves *Hosanna*, as Angelus Caninius shows from the Chaldee, the Talmud, and Elias (*Tract. de nomin. Heb. c.* 4). But this Hosanna of the Chaldee paraphrast and the Talmudists was subsequent to our Christian *Hosanna*, so that it was rather taken from ours than ours from theirs. Besides, the *Hosanna* of the Feast of Tabernacles was one of affliction and deprecation, but the *Hosanna* in this place of Christ was one of jubilation and triumph.

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This multitude, therefore, broke forth by God's inspiration into this joyful shout of *Hosanna*, in honour of Christ, even as the children did in verse 15. Although the occasion of it was the remembrance of that great miracle, *viz.*, the raising of Lazarus, which had been performed shortly before by Christ in Bethany, as is plain from John xi. 15, and xii. 9, 17.

*To the Son of David:* many of the ancients refer these words to the multitude, as if they asked for salvation from their own Messiah. *Hosanna to the Son of David*, i.e., our salvation is from the Son of David. Or, let salvation come to us from the Son of David. So Origen, S. Jerome, Bede, &c.

Others refer *Son of David* not to *Hosanna*, but to *saying*. They said to the Son of David, *i.e.*, to Christ, *Save me*, who am thy people, O Son of David, *i.e.*, Messiah, our King.

But I say that *Hosanna to the Son of David*, means the same thing as, *Save I beseech thee, Son of David.* For so it should be rendered according to the Latin syntax. But the Greek interpreter, equally with the Latin, followed the Hebraism. For the Hebrew verb *hoscha*, *save*, is constructed with *lamed*, which is the sign of the dative case, and sometimes of the accusative. The multitude therefore besought God to save and prosper Messiah, that they might all be safe, and live happily under Him. Or still better and more simply, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, let that solemn *Hosanna* be made to Jesus sprung from David, whom we acknowledge to be the promised, and up to this time expected Son of David.* Let Him be, let Him happen, let Him be acclaimed unanimously by us. This is the voice and the acclamation of the people by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, acknowledging Jesus as the Son of David, *i.e.*, the Messiah, and congratulating Him, as it were entering upon the kingdom of His father David, the restoration of which by Him had been so long expected; in fine, praying for health, prosperity and all propitious things for Him from God, and joyfully promising the same to themselves through Him. For where Christ is called the Son of David, there there

* With this line begins a translation of every word of the original Latin.

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is reference to the restitution of David's kingdom. So Franciscus Lucas.

Moreover Caninius in the place already quoted from, thus expounds, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, i.e., in our hands we bear *Hosannas*, that is branches of palms, to the *Son of David*, that indeed we may honour Him as the King Messiah, and in triumph accompany Him as a victor and triumphing. Or, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, that is, cut ye down boughs, which as Hosanna ye may offer to the Son of David. As the Poet says, "Give ye lilies with full hands." But one thing was the Hosanna of the Feast of Tabernacles, namely like a certain Litany, another thing that of the crowd here by Hosanna to Christ, proclaiming and congratulating His triumph, as I have said a little before.

More plainly and fully you may say, that by the people it was here cried to Christ, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, meaning thus: "O Lord save not only our Messiah, David's Son and Heir, but grant also to Him the power of saving all the faithful believing in Him, and subject unto Him, that Thy Divine salvation may be so abundantly derived from Thee to Christ that He may cause the same to emanate and flow forth unto us. For verbs of the conjugation *Hiphil* have a specially active force, whence they often signify a double action. *Hosca* therefore, *i.e.*, *save*, signifies, *save Christ*, and at the same time cause that He should save His subjects, that in truth, even as He is called, so He may verily be *Jesus*, i.e., the Saviour of the World. For Jesus is derived from ישע *iasca*, i.e., *he hath saved*, which in *Hiphil*, the action being augmented, makes הושע *hosca*. From this cause the translator gives, *to the Son of David*, in the dative, whereas otherwise it might be translated, *the Son of David*, in the accusative. For the dative signifies, that salvation, *i.e.*, the power of saving all men, as it were, appropriated to Him alone was given to Christ by God. Note this, because as far as I know it has not been observed by any one.

Here, therefore, Christ as the glorious, powerful and triumphant King of Israel, whom none can resist, is as it were installed in Jerusalem, the royal city, in which formerly David and Solomon the

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ancestors of Christ had gloriously reigned, that He might restore their fallen kingdom, yea perfect it; and instead of its being earthly, make it heavenly; divine, instead of human; eternal, instead of temporal. Him furthermore the people by Hosanna partly applaud, partly pray for salvation for Him, *i.e.*, felicity and every good thing. This is what Mark says (xi. 9, 10)." And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

Moreover Christ as it were entered into this His kingdom of the Church, five days afterwards, on the day before the Passover, when He triumphed on the Cross over sin, the world, the devil and hell, and delivered all nations from their power as far as He was concerned, and subjugated them. Wherefore the Church in her Votive Mass of the Passion of Christ, sings to Him, "To Thee be glory, Hosanna; to Thee triumph and victory: to Thee the crown of highest praise and honour, Alleluia." Hence too the Church in the Benediction of Palms prays to God that, "carrying palms and branches of olives, we may with good deeds run to meet Christ and may through Him enter into eternal joy."

*Blessed* (supply, *may He be*) *who cometh* (Greek, ὁ ἐρχόμενος, i.e., *He coming*, viz., *who was about to come, who was expected*) *in the name of the Lord.* It means, may God bless, further, prosper, and make glorious the Kingdom of Messiah, our King. For He cometh to us *in the name of the Lord*, i.e., He is authorised, sent, and endowed by the Lord. Thus in Jeremiah (iv. 16) it is said, "Thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord," *i.e.*, by the commandment, authority, and in the place of God. And (chap. iii. 17), "All nations shall be gathered together unto it (Jerusalem) in the name of the Lord." There is an allusion to Psalm xlv. 3, "Gird Thee with Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most Mighty," &c., "Press forward, proceed prosperously, and reign." "For Christ is the King of Israel," says S. Augustine (in *Joan. cap.* xii. 23), "in that He rules minds; that He counsels for eternity; that He leads those who believe, hope, and love, to the Kingdom of Heaven."

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*Tropologically*, Remigius: Christ, he says, *comes in the name of the Lord*, because in all His good works He sought not His own glory, but the glory of the Father.

*Hosanna in the highest*: Jansen explains it as though it were said, "Thou, O Lord, who art, and who dwellest in the highest Heavens, save Messiah." Better Franc. Lucas, Maldonatus, and others, take the preposition ב, *in*, for מן, *min*, i.e., *from*, according to the Hebrew construction, as though it were said, "Thou, O Lord, from Heaven, yea from the highest top of Heaven, save and prosper King Messiah." For they prayed for Messiah, not earthly and transitory salvation from man; but divine, heavenly, and eternal from God, *viz.*, that God would divinely save Him, and give Him the power of saving others; that, indeed, Christ by His grace would lead all His faithful and holy ones to the eternal salvation, felicity, kingdom, and glory. Hence Origen explains *Hosanna* to mean restitution to life eternal. For this is intimated by the words, *in the highest*, or as he himself reads, *in the lofty*, that in truth this salvation must be sought for not on earth, but in Heaven. Again, S. Jerome says, "The advent of Christ is shown to be the salvation of the whole world, joining earthly things to heavenly." The *Gloss* adds, *in the lofty*, because Christ is the salvation even of the angels, whose number He fills up. Whence Emm. Sa adds that even the angels who are in the high places are here invited to the triumph and praise of Christ Messiah. Wherefore S. Luke (xix. 38), instead of *Hosanna*, has *peace in Heaven*, that is, safety, prosperity, and every good thing (for this is what peace denotes to the Hebrews) be from Heaven to Messiah, and through Him may they flow, and rain from God upon us; and *glory on high* (supply) may there be to God, the giver to Messiah. Or rather, *glory*, viz., of the kingdom, firm, great, and constant, this is a glorious kingdom; *in*, i.e., *from* on high, understand, from Heaven let there be divinely given to our Messiah. So Franc. Lucas. Again, more loftily, *Peace in Heaven* (let there be), namely, that God, until now angry with men, may be propitious to Christ, and through Christ to us; and may He reconcile angels to men, Heaven to earth, God to the synagogue. "Hence some,"

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says S. Chrysostom, "interpret *Hosanna, glory*—others, *the Resurrection*; for also glory is due to Him, and redemption belongs to Him, who all hath redeemed." Meaning, let glory and praise be to the God of all things who is on high. The angels sang the same at the birth of Christ. But *Hosanna* properly signifies not glory, but salvation. But our salvation through Christ was the glory of God. In another sense, in the preface of the Sacrifice of the Mass, at the Trisagion, Holy, Holy, Holy, is added. "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," that, indeed, we should pray not for Christ, but for ourselves, through Christ, for salvation, by asking that He also may by all be blessed, worshipped, praised, and may in turn copiously pour forth His blessings and graces upon us. Luke adds (xix. 41), *And when He drew near, beholding the city, He wept over it, saying, because thou shouldst have known, even thou*, &c. Because He foresaw and foretold its dreadful punishment and destruction by Titus and Vespasian.

Verse 10. *And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?* Who with so great honour, applause, congratulation, as it were the King of Israel, enters into Jerusalem, whilst the Scribes and Pharisees are looking on—yea, the Roman soldiers of Tiberius Cæsar, who would not suffer another than Cæsar to be called King of Judæa? Wherefore Christ, now bearing Himself as a king, would have come into peril of death, had not He, by the power of His Divinity, struck not only all the Jews but the Romans with amazement, and rendered them as it were thunderstruck, so that no one should dare to lay hands upon Him, nay, nor even think of such a thing. So Abulensis and others.

*But the people said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee.* Greek, ὁ προφήτης, i.e., *that prophet, par excellence*, who far surpasses and transcends all the prophets in preaching, sanctity, power, and miracles. Therefore He is Messias, the King of Israel. *Of Nazareth:* for although Jesus was born at Bethlehem, yet He was brought up at Nazareth. Christ by this glory of His gave occasion to His death; for the Scribes, being stirred up by it to envy and hatred of Him, after four days crucified Him. In truth, God—

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foreknowing all things—ordered all these things, in part positively, in part permissively, that from them He might elicit greater good, namely, the redemption of the world, to be accomplished by the death of Christ. The malice, therefore, of the Scribes fulfilled the counsel and decree of God concerning the death of Christ and the redemption of the world, as S. Peter teaches (Acts ii.)

*And Jesus entered into the Temple of God, and cast out all that sold.* Jesus, entering into Jerusalem, did not come to the citadel of Sion as a second David, but to the Temple, that He might show that He was the Son of God the Father, Who was worshipped in the Temple; that He might refer to Him the honour here ascribed by the people to Himself, for He had accepted it for no other end than that He might lead men to God. Wherefore it is not doubtful that Christ gave thanks in the Temple to God the Father, because He had manifested Him to the whole city as Messiah, yea, had glorified Him by the applause of all the people. Again, the first care of Jesus, as Pontiff and Messiah, was of the Temple. Whence, entering into the city, He came to that the first, that He might teach us to do the same. For this reason He set out His journey through Bethany (where He raised Lazarus) and Bethphage, which were over against the Temple, that through them He might proceed straightway to the Temple. For as I have said (verse 1), Christ—passing over the Mount of Olives from Bethany—proceeded directly from thence, through the Valley of Jehosaphat, to the golden gate, which pertained both to the Temple and to the city, near to which was the golden eagle set up by Herod. Wherefore through this gate there was immediate access to the Temple. See Adrichomius, in his account of Jerusalem, where he graphically describes this journey of Christ, and adds that it was said by some that this golden gate was wont to be shut, but that at the coming of Christ it was opened as by a miracle.

Note, that by the Temple here is understood not the Holy Place, nor the Holy of Holies (for into the latter it was lawful only for the high priest, into the former only for the priests, to enter), but the court of the Temple; for into this the laity were accustomed to

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enter in order to pray and behold the sacrifices, which were offered in the court of the Priests, before the Holy Place. For this court was, as it were, the people's Temple. For Christ was not a Levitical priest, forasmuch as He was not sprung from Levi and Aaron. Wherefore He could not enter the Holy Place, nor the court of the Priests, but only the court of the people. Wherefore what Faustus the Manichee invented concerning the genealogy of Christ—as though He were sprung from the tribe of Levi—and His Levitical priesthood (*apud S. Augustinum, lib.* 23, *contra eundem Faustum*); also what Theodosius, a prince of the Jews in the time of the Emperor Justinian, said (which Suidas recites under the words, *Jesus Christus*) too rashly believed by Suidas and others; all learned men laugh at as dreams and most fabulous errors. Verily Vilalpando (*tom.* 2, *lib.* 3, *cap.* 9) thinks that this court was the court of the Gentiles. For who can believe that these merchants penetrated the inner courts when they could conveniently sell their goods in the outer courts? Especially because Christ in the same day and place had to do with Gentiles, as is plain from John xii. 20. But the Gentiles were not able to enter the court of the Jews, but that of the Gentiles, which was before the court of the Jews. This court then was Solomon's porch—probably the eastern part of Solomon's porch, in the court of the Gentiles—in which were sold doves, sheep, and lambs for sacrificing in the Temple, whom Christ drove out of it. For the court of the Gentiles was, as it were, the temple of the Gentiles, in which, therefore, it was not seemly to buy and sell.

*And He cast out all that sold and bought in the Temple.* Not on Palm Sunday itself, but on the next day; for Mark (xi. 11), who exactly and precisely relates these actions of Christ, performed each day from Palm Sunday until the Friday on which He suffered and was crucified, says, *on the day following* the Palm Sunday on which this solemn entry of Christ into the city took place—that is, on the Monday—were these things done by Christ in the Temple. Christ, therefore, on Palm Sunday entered into the city and the Temple in solemn pomp, and prayed in it, and gave thanks to God; afterwards, about eventide He went out of the city to Bethany, with the twelve

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Apostles; and on the next day (Monday) He returned to the city and Temple, and drave out of it the sellers and buyers, as Mark relates (xi. 11, 12, 15). Wherefore there is here in Matthew a hyperbaton, or inverted historical order. For He wished to join with Christ's entrance into the Temple His ejection of the buyers from the Temple, for the sake of brevity, lest he should be compelled to relate over again the entrance of Christ into the Temple on the following day. Moreover, Christ drove them from the Temple (that is, from the court of the Temple) for two reasons. The first is, because it was not seemly that those things should be sold in the Temple, but in the market-place; for the Temple is the house of prayer, not of merchandise, as Christ says. The second was the avarice and usury of the priests. For they were wont—by their own people, or servants, or factors—to sell at a dear rate sheep, kids, doves, to those who wished to offer them in the Temple; especially to those who came from a distance, and poor people, from whom (on account of delay in payment) they extorted gain by usury. Whence they are called robbers by Christ. Thus S. Chrysostom and others. Lastly, Christ twice cast out buyers from the Temple; the first time, at the beginning of His preaching (John ii. 14), the second, towards the end of it, four days before His death, as is plain from this place. So S. Chrysostom, Augustine, Euthymius, Theophylact, Jansen, Maldonatus, Toletus, and others.

*And overthrew the tables of the money-changers* (Syriac, *bankers*), *and the seats of them that sold doves. Money-changers*—Greek, κολλυβιστῶν: for *collyba*, as S. Jerome says, means what we call sweetmeats, or cheap little presents—for example, of parched peas, grapes, raisins, and apples of various kinds. Therefore, because the collybistæ who lent money might not receive usury, they took for interest various sorts of things that they exacted by means of these things, which are bought for money, what it was not lawful to take in money; as if Ezekiel had not spoken of this very thing, saying, "Ye shall not take usury or increase." (Ezekiel xxii.)

With more probability Jansen and others are of opinion from Hesychius and Pollux that these collybistæ did not lend money

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but only exchanged it, so that for gold they gave silver, less for greater, for foreign money, domestic, and that with interest and profit; the collybistæ therefore were the money-brokers, so called from κόλλυβος, *i.e.*, small change, which people gave for handling money.

*Tropologically*, money changers are simoniacal persons, indeed all sinners who profane their soul, which is the temple of God, by lusts and sins, according to the words, "Know ye not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 *Cor.* vi. 19), and, "if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (1 *Cor.* iii. 17). So S. Jerome, Origen and *Auctor Imperfecti.*

*And the seats* in which the men and women who sold doves were wont to sit. For doves were often sold by women, who being weak, and unable to stand long, procure seats for themselves, according to the saying of Martial, "she sits in the women's seats all day long." It is wonderful that no one withstood one poor man, as Christ was, overturning all the gains of the priests in the temple. Whence S. Jerome thinks that this was Christ's greatest Miracle, that He alone could "by the stripes of one scourge cast out so great a multitude, and overturn the tables, and break the seats, and do other things which a vast army could not have done. For something fiery and starlike shot from his eyes, and the majesty of the Godhead shone in His face." Thus far S. Jerome. Christ therefore here showed a great zeal for religion and the temple, and fulfilled the words of the Psalm (lxix. 9). "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me," as John says (ii. 17).

*Mystically.* They sell doves who sell the grace of the Holy Ghost, as orders, priesthood, and benefices. For a dove is the symbol of the Holy Ghost. Thus Origen: "And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. (Isaiah lvi. 7.) Arab. *a cave for robbers.* "For a robber," says S. Jerome, "and he who converts the temple into the appearance of a robber's den is he who makes gain out of religion; and his worship is not so much the worship of God as an occasion of business," because forsooth, such priests, wholly

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bent on lucre, lurking in a place of honest appearance, the temple, as in a den, by selling at a dear rate, by usury and by other fraudulent arts and methods were wont to despoil foreigners and poor people, yea plunder them, as robbers do. "For a robber," says S. Isidore (*lib.* x. *etymol. litera L.*), "is an infester of the ways," in Latin *latro* from *latendo.* But *latro* is better derived as if from *latero, he who lies in wait at the side of the way.*" And Varro (*lib.* 6 *de lingua Latina*) says, "*latrones* (robbers) are so called from *latere,* because they have a sword at their side." And Sextus Pompeius (*de Verb. signif. litera L.*) says, "the ancients called *latrones* those who fought for hire, ἀπὸ τῆς λατρείας, *i.e.,* hire, but now highwaymen are called *latrones* because they make their attack *à latere,* or because they lurk in secret (*latenter*)."

There is an allusion to Jeremiah vii. 11, where God says, "Is this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord." For these Semi-atheists thought that they hid themselves and their wickedness so that they should not be seen by God, as robbers hide themselves and lurk in caves.

Observe: the Temple is called the House of God, not as though God corporeally dwelt in it as in a house (for this S. Paul denies, Acts xvii. 24), but because the temple is the place appointed for worshipping and praying to God; in which God hears the supplications of those who pray. But the Temple of Christians is called especially the House of God because Christ the Lord corporeally dwells in it in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, says S. Thomas.

*Tropologically:* the Temple is a house not for talk, nor speculation, nor drinking, nor revelling, but for prayer. Let therefore those who profane it by gossiping, by gaping about them, by acting lasciviously, by drinking, see how they will be scourged by Christ. For as Bede says (*in cap.* 2, *Joannis*), "Those things might seem to be lawfully sold in the Temple which were bought with the intention of offering them in the same Temple to the Lord; but the Lord Himself being unwilling that any earthly business, not even that which was con-

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sidered honest, should be transacted in His house, drove away the unjust traffickers, and cast them all out together with the things which they sold. What then, my brethren, what do we think the Lord would do if He found people quarrelling, or listening to fables, or giving way to laughter, or entangled in any other wickedness, when He saw those who were buying in His Temple victims which were to be offered to Himself, and made haste to cast them out?" Especially when these buyers and sellers did not lodge in the Temple itself, strictly speaking, but only in a court of the Temple, indeed in a court common to all nations; and yet they were cast out by Christ from thence: what then will He do to Christians who perpetrate these and worse indignities in His Temple before the Holy Sacrament?

Learn from hence how great reverence is due to the Temple, such indeed as is due to God's House, for Christ calls it *My house.* Wherefore as a master inquires into and punishes an injury done to his house, as though it were done to himself, so also does Christ look upon an indignity done to His Temple as done to Himself, and as such punishes and avenges it. Wherefore appositely does S. Augustine give the monition in his rule, "Let no one do anything in the Oratory, except that for which it was made, from whence also it hath its name." See what has been said on Isaiah lvi. 7, and Levit. ix. at the end of the chapter.

Verse 14. *And the blind and the lame came to Him, and He healed them,* that by these miracles He might show Himself to be Messiah, yea God; and so that He had been rightly honoured by the acclamations of the people and the pomp. For Isaiah had foretold (xxxv. 5) that Messiah would work such miracles. And they were worthy both of Christ and the Temple, and Christ substituted them for the covetous traffic in cattle.

Verse 15. *And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the Temple, and saying Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased.* Both because they were envious of this glory of Christ, as because they were displeased at their gains and marketings being cast out of the Temple.



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Verse 16. *And said unto Him, hearest Thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?* (Psalm viii. 3.) The Hebrew is יסרת עז, *iissadta oz*, i.e., *hast founded strength.* Aquila, *hast laid foundations, power;* Sixtine edition, *Thou hast constituted strength;* Tertullian (*Lib. de anima, cap.* 19), *Thou hast furnished praise;* Syriac, *Thou hast directed praise;* Arabic, *Thou hast prepared praise.* This is, Thou hast proved, confirmed, made Thy power perfectly laudable, when out of the mouth of infants, not having the use of their tongues, and not yet able to give utterance, or to speak, Thou dost express Thy praise and glory. For thou hast caused that on Palm Sunday infants with the people should cry out to Christ, *Hosanna to the Son of David.* S. Hilary, and *Auctor Imperfecti*, understand by *infants* boys already able to speak and give utterance. With more truth S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact think that these were really infants unable to speak, as it is here expressly said. Whence the Syriac translates, *Out of the mouth of little boys and infants Thou hast directed praise;* and therefore Luke adds (xix. 40) that Christ said, *If these should be silent the stones will cry out.* By this was signified that the infants equally with the boys being moved and acted upon by a Divine instinct and miracle, cried *Hosanna* to Christ, though they did not understand the word, yea although the infants naturally were not yet able to speak it. The reason was that which the Psalmist subjoins (Psalm viii.), "That Thou mayest destroy the enemy and the avenger," that in truth, through the mouths of infants Thou mayest confound the Scribes and Pharisees, the enemies of Christ, and mayest teach that they are senseless, and more foolish than infants, for these acknowledge, praise, and glorify Jesus as Christ. But those latter words of the psalm Christ did not cite, intentionally, lest He should too greatly exasperate the Scribes. At the same time, Christ here intimates that infants should be early taught, as soon as they begin to speak, to utter pious words—that their first words should be *Hosanna, Jesus, Mary*, &c. Thus S. Jerome writes to Blæsilla, that she should teach her little daughter Paula, the grandchild of her grandmother,

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S. Paula, as soon as she began to speak, to utter and pronounce *Alleluia*. So our S. Francis Borgia was taught when an infant to utter as his first words, *Jesus*, *Maria*, as Ribadaneira testifies in his life. Thus the Trisagion, for example, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, was revealed to a boy caught up into the air at the time of an earthquake at Constantinople, which ceased as soon as the people, instructed by the boy, cried the Trisagion, A.D. 446, in the time of the Emperor Theodosius, as Damascene testifies (*Tract de Trisagis*). For God delights in the praises of boys, for boys (*pueri*) are so called from purity (*puritate*), says Varro, because they are not yet come to years of puberty, and are pure like terrestrial angels.

Arias Montanus (*in Psalm* ii.) observes, that infants in all nations utter the word יה, *iah*, which is the Name of God, and an abbreviation of *Jehovah*; and thus God claims for Himself the commencement and foundations of His wonderful Name, firmly uttered by the very mouth of infants. In like manner, Arnobius asserts that there is no man whatsoever who has not entered upon the first day of his life with the idea of God; and that the brutes, the trees, and the stones would cry out, if they were able to speak, that God is the Lord of all things. So Plato (*lib.* 10, *de Republ.*) and Cicero (*lib.* 1, *de Natura Deorum*) teach that we share in the knowledge and praise of God with our mother's milk. Lyra distinguishes a threefold order of children praising God. The first are those who praise God by their deaths, not with their mouths; such as the Innocents who were slain by Herod for Christ's sake. The second, such as praise with their mouths rather than by their deaths, like those who sang *Hosanna* to Christ. The third, those who both by their mouths and their deaths praised God. Such were S. Agnes, thirteen years of age; S. Pancras, twelve; SS. Vitus, Celsus, and others. See our Philip Barlaymont (*in Paradiso puerorum, cap.* 13 *and* 14), where he recounts the praises and oracles of God uttered by the mouths of infants.

Observe: the eighth Psalm seems to be spoken literally of God's magnificence which He shows in the creation of the universe, in



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which He made man the lord of all things. Yet more appropriately and profoundly, according to the letter, it speaks of the magnificence of God which He manifests in the re-creation and redemption of the world, in which He has made Christ the conqueror of death and sin, and the Redeemer of the world, and the Lord of all things; who therefore is the First Man, and the most noble of all men. This is plain—1. Because Christ here so expounds it, as S. Paul does (Heb. ii. 7). 2. Because such great magnificence as the Psalmist there celebrates does not apply so well to the misery of man—who, after his fall into sin, lost his dominion over the brutes—as it does to Christ. 3. Because this passage, "Out of the mouths of infants and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise," applies much more clearly and truly to Christ than to any others. A like passage is Deuteronomy xviii. 18, as I have there said. For as to Maldonatus explaining it of David calling himself (in respect of Goliath, whose head he cut off) an infant, it is certain that he was not literally an infant at that time, but a spirited and warlike youth. Whence Nicephorus (*on Psalm* 8) says: "The Incarnation of the WORD is the magnificence of God."

Verse 17. *And He left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and He lodged there.* Syriac and Arabic, *He passed the night at Bethany.* See here the ingratitude and fickleness of the people; for those who that very morning had cried to Christ *Hosanna*, on the evening of the same day forsake Christ for fear of the Scribes, so that no one was found to invite Him to hospitality. Therefore Christ was forced to go out of the city to Martha and Magdalene, his hostesses at Bethany.

Verse 18. *Now in the morning as He returned into the city, he hungered.* This, therefore, took place on the day after Palm Sunday, on Monday, the eleventh day of Nisan, the first month; which is, according to our reckoning, the twenty-first of March. For three days afterwards (namely, on Friday in the Paschal season, which fell that year on the twenty-fifth day of March) Christ was crucified and offered up.

*He hungered.* Not with natural hunger, but with hunger volun-

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tarily excited, say S. Chrysostom and Abulensis (*quæst.* 103). For it was morning, and Christ had supped with Martha the evening previous; so that He would not so soon again be hungry. He stirred up, therefore, this hunger in Himself, that by it He might have occasion to curse the unfruitful fig tree. Wherefore, also, He sought figs upon it, although He knew that the time of figs was not yet, as Mark has (xi. 13). For this was the twenty-first of March, as I have said, at which time there are no figs.

Observe: this hunger of Christ and the withering of the fig tree were before He cast out of the Temple the buyers and sellers. For He did this on this same Monday, but after the withering of the fig tree, as appears from Mark xi. 14, &c., where he assigns the actions of Christ to the several days on which they were done.

Verse 19. *And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.* Christ cursed the fig tree, and dried it up, that He might manifest His power, by which He was able in like manner to destroy and wither up the Scribes and the Jews, His enemies, if He wished; and to show that He would shortly suffer the Cross and death at their hands, not against His will, but voluntarily. Note that this curse of Christ was not done *proprie*, but by *catachresis*, *abusive*. For this malediction only signifies that Christ prayed for evil—*i.e.*, withering for the fig tree—which it is lawful, especially to Christ, for a sufficient reason to pray for, for inanimate things; for to Him belong all the trees and farms of all men. See what has been said (Jeremiah xx. 14, and Job iii. 1). In like manner, S. Francis cursed a juniper tree planted by blessed Juniper, one of his first companions, in punishment of his disobedience. From thenceforward, this tree did not grow a nail's breadth after the day in which it was planted in the ground. This tree is still visited at Carinula, or Calenum, a town of Campania Felix, near Mondragonium, in a monastery of the Friars Minor. For blessed Juniper was busy planting this tree, and being called by S. Francis, he delayed obeying the call until he had finished his work. S. Francis cursed

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the tree because it had been an occasion and object of disobedience, and bade it grow no more; and so it straightway happened that the tree obeyed the saint, in order to teach men the evil of disobedience. So Wadding (*in Annal. Minorum*, A.D. 1222, *num.* 11).

Verse 20. *And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!* The Vulg. omits *fig tree*, which is found in the Greek and Syriac. This took place on the following day, for Christ on the Monday returning from Bethany to Jerusalem cursed the fig tree: after that He cast out the buyers from the Temple, and taught there: in the evening He returned from the city to Bethany: on the Tuesday morning, as the disciples were returning with Him from Bethany to Jerusalem, they saw the fig tree dried up, and then they cried in wonder, *How immediately is it dried up!* That this is the order in which the events happened is plain from Mark xi. 19, 20.

*Symbolically:* Christ cursed the fig tree, because a fig was the tree which God forbade, of which Adam ate, and ruined himself and his posterity, as the learned men whom I have cited (Gen. ii. 9) think with probability.

*Allegorically:* the withered fig tree denotes the Jews, who when Christ came, being unbelieving, lost the sap of faith and grace, and so bring forth no fruits of good works. Thus Origen.

*Tropologically:* the fig tree, full of leaves but without figs, denotes believers who have the leaves of a profession of the faith but lack the solid fruit of virtues, and so will be cursed by Christ. Thus Origen.

Verse 21. *Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith* (that excellent and efficacious faith, like a grain of mustard seed, of which, chap. xvii. 19) *and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree* (that which ye see has been done by Me, as is plain from the Greek), *but also ye shall say to this mountain, Lift up* (viz. *thyself*, as follows; in the Greek ἄρθητι, *i.e.*, as the Syriac, *be lifted up*, be rooted up out of the earth) *and be thou cast* (Gr. βλήθητι, Syr. *fall*) *into the sea, it shall be done. And shall not hesitate*, Gr. μὴ διακριθῆτε, *i.e.*, *shall not dispute*, as doubting and hesitating; *shall not distinguish whether what ye ask be easy, or hard to be done.* For many, because they think what they ask arduous and difficult, are in

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doubt whether they shall obtain it from God, and so do not obtain it. But they do not distinguish between easy and difficult, thinking that what is difficult to them is easy to God, and who therefore rely on the Divine Omnipotence, goodness and promise, by which He has promised that we shall obtain from Him all things which we ask of Him with certain faith and confidence; wherefore, I say, they lift up their minds and hopes above their infirmity, and set them upon God, certainly expecting from Him the end and fruit of their prayer; such, I say obtain whatsoever and how much soever they ask of Him. *This mountain*, Olivet, for Jesus, proceeding by it to Jerusalem, there spake these things. So Abulensis (*quæst.* 134), Franc. Lucas and others. Other things which pertain to this subject I have spoken of, chapter xvii. 19.

So on account of the infidelity of the Turks who are masters of the Holy Land, the Angels, A.D. 1291, transferred from Galilee and Nazareth the house of the Blessed Virgin (in which she, the angel announcing it, conceived the Son of God), to Dalmatia, and subsequently, A.D. 1294, to Italy (Lauretum), where is the seat and the head of the faith and the faithful; and therefore on account of that faith it works in the same place innumerable miracles, which our Horace Turselli relates in his History of Loretto.

Verse 22. *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Believing*, i.e., if ye shall believe and be confident that ye shall obtain those things from God, according to James i. 6. "Let him ask in faith, nothing doubting." See what is there said.

Well speaks S. Bernard (Serm. 15 in Psal. *Qui habitat*), expounding *tropologically* the words of God to Joshua, chap. i. "Whatsoever place your foot shall tread upon shall be yours." "Your foot," he says "is your faith, and let it go as far as it will, it shall obtain, if so be that it be fixed wholly upon God, that it be firm, and stumble not." The reason *à priori* is the liberality and munificence of God, which does not suffer itself to be surpassed by our hope, but far surpasses and transcends it.

Verse 23. *And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests*

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*and the elders of the people came unto Him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority? By what power* (*Vulg.*), Greek, ἐξουσίᾳ, i.e., *authority;* meaning, "Who gave Thee right and authority to teach in the Temple? to cast out of it the buyers and sellers? and to call the people together to acclaim thee by Hosanna as the Teacher and the Messiah?

Verse 24. *And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.* It is commonly said, He does not put an end to a suit who resolves a suit by a suit. For thus dishonest lawyers, when they have no faith in their cause, get up another cause and lawsuit, so that they may quibble and escape condemnation. So also when the heretics cannot reply to the arguments of Catholics, they bring forward other arguments, so as to find a way of escape from their heresy and ignorance. But Christ does not here act so, but he proposes another question, on the solution of which depended the answer to the question proposed by the Scribes. Thus—"Ye do not believe Me when I say that I have received power from God, believe then John the Baptist who bare witness to Me, that I have been sent by God to do these things."

*The baptism of John, whence was it, from Heaven or of men?* By the baptism of John, Christ means his testimony, doctrine, and the whole of his preaching concerning Him. There is a *synecdoche.* This is Christ's argument, bearing upon the Scribes with irresistible force. Thus, "Ye ask, from whence I have power—from God or from men? I, in reply, ask you, from whom had John power to preach and baptize—from God or from men? If he had that authority from God, as all allow, then have I the same authority from God. For this was the witness which John gave of Me, teaching that he was the servant, but I the Messiah, the Son of God. And this he did when ye sent messengers to him expressly about this very thing, to ask him if he were the Messias." (John i. 20, 26, 27.)

*From Heaven,* come from God. Where observe: The Hebrews by *metonyme,* by which that which holds is put for what is held,

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call God שמים, *Scamaim*, i.e., *Heaven*. The Greek poets, following this usage, called the father of Saturn οὐρανον, and the Latins, *cælum*. Thus Caninius (*de nomin. Hebræis, c.* 2). Hence the Jews worshipped Heaven and the stars as God. Hence Christians who apostatized from Christianity to Judaism were formerly called *cælicolæ*, against whom there are extant rescripts of the emperors Theodosius and Honorius (*lib.* 18, *de Judæis et cælicolis*). See Baronius, A.D. 408. Hence also the poet sings of the Jews—

"They adore shining clouds and the divinity of Heaven."

For the Heaven by its immensity, beauty, motion, adornment, and influx, carries every one away with admiration of it. "Whence Heaven" (*cælum*), says Sipontius, "is so called because it is, as it were, sculptured (*cælatum*) with stars and constellations." But Varro (*lib.* 4, *de linguâ Latinâ*) derives it from κοίλος, *i.e.*, *hollow*, because it embraces all created things in its cavity. Hence God is, as it were, the Atlas of Heaven and earth, of whom Virgil says (*lib.* 6, *Æn.*)—

"Where Heaven-bearing Atlas turns round the Heaven,
Furnished with burning stars upon his shoulders."

Wherefore many nations have worshipped Heaven as a god. As Cicero (*lib.* 2, *de Divinat.*) says, "I have always said, and I will say, that the race of the gods belongs to Heaven." The same (*in Somnio Scipionis*) says, "And I give thanks to thee, O highest sun, and to you the rest of the heavenly ones." And Pliny (*lib.* 7, *cap.* 33) says, "Divinity and a certain most noble association of women from Heaven was in the Sibyl." Hear also S. Augustine (*lib.* x. *de Civit. cap.* 1), "And they call the gods themselves *cælicolæ*, for no other reason than that they inhabit (*colant*) Heaven, not, indeed, worshipping, but inhabiting—as it were, colonists (*coloni*) of Heaven." Lastly, Heaven is the throne of God, and the seat of His majesty and glory, as well as of the holy angels and beatified men.

Learn from hence to be ambitious of Heaven, to sigh after Heaven, to despise the earth and earthly things, and to say with our S. Ignatius, "How mean to me is the earth when I look at

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Heaven." For he who seeks Heaven, seeks paradise, happiness, a blessed eternity—he desires the God of Heaven. "O Israel, how great is the house of God, and vast the place of His possession!" (Baruch iii. 24. See the passage.)

*But they thought within themselves, saying:* Greek, διελογίζοντο, *i.e.*, they thought and conferred among themselves, deliberating what to answer Christ, being anxious and perplexed.

*If we shall say, From Heaven; He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?* verse 24. *But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. Wherefore did ye not believe him,* declaring Me to be Messiah, and persuading you to prepare by repentance for My grace and salvation? *We fear the multitude,* understand, *lest they should stone us,* as Luke adds (xx. 5). *As a prophet:* The word, *as,* is the mark of truth, not of likeness. It means, all held John for a true and a great prophet, and therefore sent by God. For a prophet is the ambassador, seer, and interpreter of God. Thus it is said of Christ (John 1.), "We saw His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father," where *as* denotes reality, not similitude. Meaning, "We saw the glory of Him, as verily the Only Begotten Son of God, or, of Him who was the true and Only Begotten of God."

*And they answered Jesus and said, We know not.* They lie; for they had seen the life of John, as well as his most holy and divine preaching, sealed by his death and martyrdom for the sake of chastity. But dishonesty would rather lie than be convicted of falsehood and convinced of dishonesty.

*And He said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.* It means, "Ye are not willing to answer My question, wherefore neither will I answer yours, because the solution of yours depends upon Mine. But ye say that ye do not know it, and ye lie. I say that I know, but am unwilling to say; and I speak the truth, that I may confound and put down your insolence." For by this answer Christ stopped the mouth of the Scribes, so that they were as silent as mice, nor did they dare again to open their lips. Whence S. Jerome says: "He showed that they knew, but would not answer,

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and that He knew, and did not answer, because they kept back what they knew.

*How seemeth it to you?* Christ, by the following parable, convicted the Scribes and Pharisees—who said that they knew not whether the baptism of John were from heaven or of men—of the utmost dishonesty and obstinacy; because, although they wished to to be accounted sons of God, yet refused to receive John who was sent by God, and would not believe His preaching, nor do penance. Moreover, Christ in this place, says S. Chrysostom, brings in guilty the judges themselves, with a great confidence in justice, where the cause is entrusted to the adversary. But He employs a parable, that they may not perceive how they are pronouncing sentence against themselves: "A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterwards he repented and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto Him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." (Verses 28—32.)

This parable scarcely needs an explanation, because Christ applies and explains it. In truth, the first—being at the beginning unwilling to obey his father, but afterwards repenting and obeying, by going to work in the vineyard—denotes the publicans and harlots; who at first by their sins repelled the will and law of God, but afterwards by John's preaching came to a better mind, and did penance, and lived chastely and justly, according to the law of God. The second son —who said to his father that he would go into the vineyard, but broke his word, and went not—denotes the Scribes and Pharisees; who always had the law of God in their mouths (as though they were most zealous and religious observers of it), but did not fulfil it in their deeds, but by lust, rapine, and usury acted contrary to it.

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Wherefore they provoked the heavy displeasure and anger of God against them, as well on account of their wickedness itself as because of their hypocrisy and feigned observance of the Law. For such hypocrisy and duplicity grievously provokes God.

*Go before*—Greek προάγουσιν, in the present tense; future in *Vulg.* Meaning as follows: "The publicans and harlots precede you, O ye Scribes, *i.e.*, they go before you in the way of God and of virtue, and advance to Heaven by the pattern of faith, repentance, and change of life; and therefore they will indeed precede and go before you into the kingdom of Heaven, into which ye wicked ones will never enter, although ye might enter if ye would repent and change your lives. Thus (chap. v. 19) *the least in the kingdom of Heaven* are the impious and the reprobate, who shall be shut out of it.

*In the way of justice;* the Syriac is, *walking in the way of rectitude* —*i.e.*, leading a life perfectly just, right, holy and blameless.

*Neither repented—i.e.*, did not do penance. The Greek is οὐ μετεμελήθητε, did not repent and amend.

*Mystically.* Publicans and harlots denote the Gentiles, who at first were slaves to idols and vices, and afterwards were converted by the preaching of the Apostles, and served God and virtue. The Pharisees and Scribes denote the Jews, who seemed to worship God, but really despised Him, since they despised Christ who was sent by Him, and hardened their hearts in this perfidy. Whence S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, Origen, S. Athanasius, Bede, Euthymius, Maldonatus, Jansen, and others, *passim*, interpret the parable of them.

*Tropologically.* Christ shows, says S. Chrysostom, that the populace and plebeians, who some time or other are converted, are better than priests who are never converted.

*Tropologically.* Ordinary Christians and lay people who, from a desire of holiness, keep evangelical counsels, although they are not bound to them by vow or profession, are like the first son. Priests, monks, and religious, who have taken vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and afterwards break them, are like the second son.

"Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which

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planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto Him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons" (Verses 33—41). Christ turns the point of this parable against the Scribes and Pharisees, His adversaries; but borrows it from Isaiah (v. 1), that He may add weight to it, so as to press and convince them. For Isaiah there made use of it, and predicted that Christ would use it. For Isaiah begins his fifth chapter thus: "I will sing to my beloved (Christ Incarnate) a song of my kinsman of his vineyard. A vineyard has been made for my beloved in the horn of a son of oil" (*Vulg.*)—*i.e.*, in a horn of olives, meaning in Judæa, which was strong and lofty like a horn, and fertile and rich like an olive. I have expounded this at length on Isaiah v.; from whence I will repeat summarily what has been there said, and will go through the whole parable in a few words.

1. *The man planting a vineyard* is God founding the Church, or synagogue, according to Psalm lxxx. 9. "Thou hast transplanted a vine out of Egypt, Thou hast cast out the nations (from Canaan), and there planted the vine," *i.e.*, the Synagogue, or Temple of the Jews.

2. *The hedge, the wine press and the tower* erected in the vineyard signify that God provided abundantly for His Church all things necessary. Literally however by the hedge you may understand,

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with S. Jerome, the wall of Jerusalem; or strong princes like David and the Maccabees, with the *Interlinear;* or the Law, with *Auctor Imperfecti*, and S. Irenæus (*lib.* 4. *cap.* 70). Whence instead of *hedged it round about*, the Syriac has, *protected it on all sides by a wall.*

The *wine press* is the Altar where the blood of the victims was poured out. So Origen, S. Jerome, Bede, Theophylact, Euthymius. The wine press is said to be dug, because formerly small lakes were cut out, or dug, for the purpose. Or as Mark says (xii. 1) *a lake*: where they received the new wine pressed from the grapes by the press. This is plain from Isaiah v. 2. *Tropologically*, the *wine press* says S. Jerome, denotes the martyrs, Whence the Psalms viii. lxxxi. and lxxxiv. are entitled, *For the wine presses.* But S. Hilary thinks the prophets are meant, into whom the richness of the Holy Ghost very warmly flowed. S. Chrysostom by the *wine press* understands *the word of God*, which presses and torments man, through the opposition of the flesh.

*The tower* of the vineyard, *i.e.*, of the synagogue was the temple of Jerusalem, and God's worship there. So Origen, the Chaldee, S. Hilary, Bede, Theophylact, Euthymius. *Mystically*, the prophets, pastors and teachers, together with the kings and princes of the people were *the tower.* For they as from a tower were the watchmen of the people. So the same. Whence S. Hilary says, "A *tower* denotes the eminence of the law, which towered towards heaven, and from which the Advent of Christ might be watched for.

3. *The inhabitants of the vineyard* were the princes of the people: for it is their part to rule and guide the people. *To work in the vineyard*, is to do justice, says S. Chrysostom.

4. God *went into a far country*, because, as Origen says, when He had given His law and covenants to the Jews, appearing to them on Mount Sinai, He did not afterwards appear to them, as though He had gone elsewhere.

5. *The time of fruits*, i.e., of the observance of the law and worship of God was in the time of David, Solomon, Josaphat, Hezekias, Josias, &c., when the Jews were able to live quietly to

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themselves and to God, as they ought. Or rather this *time* was always; because they were always bound to serve God, and bring forth the fruit of good works. Whence Maldonatus thinks this pertains to the figures and adornment of the parable.

6. *The servants sent by God to the vineyard*, i.e., the synagogue, to gather its fruits were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the rest of the prophets, whom the Jews killed, because they reproved their vices, stoning some of them. as Jeremiah. And He sent them a second time, and more than the first, that by His diligence and His love He might overcome the wickedness of the husbandmen. Whence S. Chrysostom says, "Through all the grades of wickedness the mercy of God went on increasing, and through all the steps of God's mercy, the wickedness kept increasing." Wherefore at length God sent unto them His Son, that is Christ, now Incarnate, whom as the Heir of the Synagogue, the Scribes both slew and crucified without the city, *i.e.*, outside of Jerusalem, on Mount Calvary, that they themselves might preside over and rule the synagogue, and enrich and magnify themselves by means of it. Instead of *they will reverence My Son*, the Syriac has, *they will be ashamed on account of My Son.*

Lastly, every one's *vineyard* that he must till is his soul. To a pastor it is his parish: to a bishop, his diocese: to a magistrate, the state; that they may bring forth the fruit of good works and virtues. The *hedge* is the laws and statutes: the *keepers* are the angels: the *tower* is meditation, reason, forethought: the *wine press* is tribulation, mortification, the cross. "*A servant is sent*," says Rabanus, "when the law, a psalm, or a prophecy is read: *he is cast out* when they are blasphemed or despised. *He kills the heir*, who tramples on the Son of God, and does despite to the Spirit of grace. *The vineyard is given to another* when the humble receive the grace which was despised by the proud."

Moreover, *The man planting the vineyard* is God, who is called a *man*, says S. Chrysostom, by similitude, not reality. By nature He is Lord, by kindness Father, according to the words in Isaiah, "The vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth is the house of Israel."

*They* (the Scribes) *say unto Him, He will miserably destroy those*

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*wicked men.* You will say, Mark and Luke assert that Christ said this; how then does Matthew attribute the same words to the Scribes? I may reply with S. Chrysostom and Euthymius, that the Scribes said it first, and afterwards Christ repeated and confirmed the same, in such manner and gesture that from thence, and from what preceded and followed (as Abulensis rightly observes, *quæst.* 20), the Scribes sufficiently understood that it was spoken of them; and then they added, *God forbid*, as Luke has (c. xx. 16).

*He will miserably destroy the wicked:* namely, the wicked ones of the vineyard, *i.e.*, the husbandmen of the Church, or the Scribes, with their followers, who killed the prophets and Christ. God will destroy them by Titus and Vespasian in this life, and by the devils in hell.

*And will let out His vineyard to other husbandmen* (viz., the Apostles and their successors), *who shall render to Him the fruits in their seasons.* This *fruit of the vineyard*, i.e., of the Church of God, is made manifest in the conversion of the whole world to the faith and holiness of Christ, and especially in the constancy of so many thousands of virgins and martyrs. The rejection of the Jews and the conversion of the Gentiles are here foretold, as Christ teaches, verse 43.

*Moraliter:* learn from hence that, like as a vineyard produces good grapes even if those who till it be evil, so does the Church and her faithful members produce the good works of virtues, even though her pastors and teachers be sometimes evil, like the Scribes. Yet will they bring forth more and larger fruits if the pastors are good, as is plain from the Apostles, whose Apostolic virtues the primitive believers imitating, excelled in chastity, charity, patience, and all virtues. Zeuxis, a famous painter, is an illustration of this emblem. He painted a boy with a basket of grapes so skilfully and beautifully as to deceive the birds; for the birds flew to these grapes as though they were real, and pecked at them, to try to eat them. Then Zeuxis said, modestly, "I have painted the grapes better than I have the boy; for the birds fly to the grapes, and do not fear the boy, who stands there, as being only a picture." Thus the shep-

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herds and keepers of the Church are frequently depraved, and badly depicted; but the grapes, *i.e.*, the works of the people, are better and more beautiful. By the carelessness of the keepers—*i.e.*, of the pastors—it comes to pass that they become the prey of the birds—that is, of the demons—by whom they are devoured.

Verse 42. *Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?* Christ cites Psalm cxviii. 22, where David speaks and prophesies of Christ. And the Scribes knew this. Wherefore they understood that they were marked and censured in this sentence by David as well as Christ. The meaning is: the Scribes, Priests, and Pharisees as the builders of the Synagogue—*i.e.*, of the Jewish Church—cast Christ from it as a worthless stone; indeed, as being hurtful to it, they condemned and killed Him. For the Scribes, whom He had previously called labourers and husbandmen, He now calls builders, says S. Jerome. But this stone rejected by the Jews *is made* by God *the Head of the corner.* That is, it was placed at the head of the corner, and was made the chief and altogether fundamental stone of the Church, and at the same time the corner stone, so as to join and connect the two walls of the Gentiles and the Jews on Itself, as in a corner, in the same fabric and house of the Church. So S. Augustine, S. Basil, Euthymius, Cassiodorus, Abulensis, Jansen, Maldonatus, and the rest of the Fathers and expositors, either here, or on Psalm cxviii. 22. Also S. Peter (*Epist.* 1, *cap.* ii. 6), where I have expounded the passage at length. For frequently in Scripture the fabric of the Church is compared to the building of a house, which is laid upon a solid foundation, such as a rock; for thus the Church is built upon, and rests upon, Christ. Christ, therefore, is the first rock of the Church, who communicated this name (together with the thing itself) to S. Peter—that after Christ he should be the rock of the Church—and then to the rest of the Apostles, whom in like manner He constituted the foundations of the Church, as is plain from the Apocalypse xxi. 19, Ephesians ii. 20, and elsewhere. Moreover, Calvin arrogantly, as well as foolishly and impiously,



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declares himself to be this stone; forasmuch as, being rejected by the Pope and the Roman Church, he became the foundation of the Calvinistic sect. Thus does that proud braggart dare to equal himself to Christ, yea, to rob Christ of His oracle and title. But let him give the signs by which he may show that he has been sent by God: let him show, I say, miracles, prophecies, Scriptures, as Christ did. But he never has shown them, and he never will. Therefore he is not the reformer of the Church, but the deformer.

Verse 43. *Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* The Church is constantly called *the kingdom of God* in the gospel, because in it God reigns in the faithful by faith and grace, and leads them to the heavenly kingdom, that He may reign in them by glory.

Behold there is here, as it were, the *epimythion*, or post-parable and application, in which Christ clearly expounds and applies the three parables which He has spoken—namely, the first, concerning *the two sons*, one obedient, the other disobedient; the second, concerning *the vineyard*, whose husbandmen killed the servants and the Son of the owner; the third, concerning *the rejected stone*, which was made the head of the corner—to the Scribes themselves, and the Jews their followers, as follows: "You, O ye Scribes, are disobedient sons to God your Father, for ye persecute Me His Only Begotten Son sent by Him. Ye, too, are the husbandmen of the vineyard, who will kill Me its Heir. Lastly, ye are the builders of the synagogue, who reject Me as a stone; but God will make Me the basis and foundation of His Church, because He will take it away from you, and transfer it to the Gentiles, who will eagerly receive and worship Me, and so will be endowed by Me with grace and glory." For all the parables of Christ have this end in view—that they may signify the rejection of the Jews and the election of the Gentiles, because the Jews rejected Christ, Whom the Gentiles accepted. By this parable Christ so pricked the Scribes, that they prepared the cross for Him.

Verse 44. *And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken;*

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*but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.* The Syriac has, *shall dissipate him.* It means, whoso shall resist Christ and persecute Him, as you do, O ye Scribes, shall do it in vain, and shall bring hurt to himself both in mind and in body: still in such sort as that it may, by repentance, be repaired.

*But upon whom it shall fall: this stone.* Upon whomsoever Christ shall press with the whole weight of His heavy vengeance, as, for example upon the damned in the Day of Judgment (as you, O ye Scribes will be damned unless ye repent), to such a one there shall remain no hope of reparation, or restitution: as if a great stone should fall upon a shell, and dash it into minutest fragments, so that in no way could it be restored, or repaired. Christ therefore here threatens the Scribes with eternal and irreparable destruction, even the flames of hell. So S. Augustine (*lib.* 1. *quæst. Evang.* ix. 30), Abulensis, Barradi, Jansen, Maldonatus and others. Hear S. Augustine, "They fall upon Him, who only despise Him, or injure Him: but He shall fall upon them, when He shall come to judgment to destroy, that the wicked may be as dust which the wind driveth away."

Verses 45, 46. *And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.* The Scribes were aware, partly from the actual words of the Psalm, partly from the words and gestures of Christ, that these things were spoken against them, wherefore they roared, and gnashed their teeth at Him; and wished to take Him and torment Him, but through fear of the people, they did not dare to do so. Behold how by degrees Christ through His reproofs of the Scribes prepared for Himself the way to the cross and death. For to this after three days He was brought by the Scribes. Thus was fulfilled the counsel of God, that He would redeem mankind by the death of Christ.

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